

UNBOLT THE DOOR: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND
FORGIVENESS IN PROVIDING PASTORAL CARE
IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

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My context included leaders from congregations of Kent County. This ministry project focused on equipping leaders in the community with awareness and education, as well as methods of pastoral care for families impacted by child sexual abuse. A special emphasis was placed on the role of forgiveness, crisis intervention, child protection, and family systems education necessary for bringing healing to victims of child sexual abuse.

Methods of analysis included utilizing case studies, personal narratives, and observation.

This ministry project resulted in increased awareness, and an increased ability to provide empathic listening techniques and caring models toward the healing of families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge those who have been an influence in my life, and who have shown me the need for an awareness ministry in our community churches to better understand and care for family members who have suffered with sexual abuse of a child. God has prepared me to bring an awareness education project concerning the prevalence of child sexual abuse causing brokenness within families, and the steps to protecting children. Also, to explore methods of pastoral care emphasizing forgiveness to bring inner healing, and improved relationships with God and other people. For this wisdom and healing I am greatly thankful.

I have been blessed with the privilege of spending many long hours and years of personal therapy with Mary Ellen Beardon, RN, LLPC, of Outpatient Services (presently called Arbor Circle) to overcome the traumatic effects of abuse I experienced or witnessed as a child born and raised by my alcoholic/addictive parents. In addition, I spent years in Al-anon and Adult Children of Alcoholics support groups who taught me life long skills to improve my mind, body, and spirit. When I began this journey I felt alone, and confused. It was through therapy, prayer, and support meetings that I found myself, was able to rise up above the rim of the deep hole I was stuck in, and eventually, I was able to climb out. With the help of therapy, prayer, and support I have forgiven my parents, and others, for their faults and I have admitted my faults to God. Through

forgiveness, God lifted the burden of emotional wounds, and replaced it with inner healing. God has made my path clear, and for that I am thankful.

I am grateful to each of the professional staff members of United Theological Seminary, especially Dr. Harold Hudson, Janice Kronour, Dr. Emma Justes, and Dr. Andrew Park who were available when I needed clarification and reassurance. I thank the faculty mentors, Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis, and Dr. Thomas Francis, consultant, Dr. Jerome Stephenson, and my peers who accepted me into the Pastoral Care and Counseling Group at the time when I felt paralyzed and questioned where God was taking me. Thanks to special peers, Carolyn Thomas, Timothy Coston, Richard North, and Dr. Denise Currie-Lowe, who were willing to hold my hand and walk with me. I thank faculty mentors, Dr. Michael Neil, Dr. Michael Faulk, Dr. Chris Wyckoff and my peers who spent time with me as I struggled to identify my place in the Christian Education in the Urban Church focus group where I began my journey in the Doctor of Ministry Program. Thanks to special peers, Dr. Brenda Robinson, Dr. Dru Veasley, Dr. Jason Wade, and Dr. Sandra Mundy, who calmed my anxiety. During my journey in the Doctor of Ministry program I was privileged to participate in two focus groups. Changing groups was a difficult transition to make, but the outcome was a good one.

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students. Also, I appreciate my context associates who have become incredible, dear friends. I clap my hands to these people: Nancy Geertman, Rev. Thurlan Meredith, Rev. Jodie Flessner, and Duane Stephenson.

I give thanks for Naomi Garcia, Ministry Consultant, who was an outstanding encourager of my work. When I began my tenor as pastor of an urban church, Naomi met with me in my church office and appointed me as Chairperson of the Abuse Prevention Committee. Since I had no knowledge or experience with this committee, I felt inadequate, yet she encouraged me to accept the position, which I did for seven years. Immediately after my retirement as a pastor, I began the Doctor of Ministry Program at United Theological Seminary, again Naomi met with me with encouragement and support for the new ministry challenge God had given to me.

I wish to thank Dr. Neil Carlson, PhD., Assistant Director of the Center for Social Research at Calvin College. As the lead pastor of an urban church located in Kent County, I participated in the Kent County Congregations Study, called Gatherings of Hope, How Religious Congregations Contribute to the Quality of Life in Kent County. The information gained from this study was the focus of the ministry project God was calling me to do.

Thanks go to Laurel Plimpton, my editor, who worked for hours, so diligently critiquing my words. The phrase she spoke I'll never forget "your thoughts are like a ping-pong ball, bouncing from place to place," reminded me that my mind was going faster than my typing. I thank Sarah Zuidema, and Misty DeVries of Children's Advocacy Center who gave me invaluable information about abused children and their

families, as well as an understanding of the role the Advocacy Center plays in intervention of child sexual abuse.

My husband, Ken, has been my greatest supporter in my life and my relationships with God, my family, and my ministry. Ken is my partner in ministry, a catalyst who keeps me in check. I can set my clock by him, and never forget my priorities.

DEDICATION

To God be the glory! God has prepared me to bring the message of the Gospel to those who struggle with brokenness in families affected by child sexual abuse. God sent Jesus Christ, to be born as a divine human being, to bring us the gift of forgiveness, which lifts the burden of emotional wounds off the victim, replacing the burden with the gift of inner healing and hope for a better future. To my husband, Ken, who has been my greatest supporter in my life and in my relationship with God, my family, and the ministry God has called me. For my three beautiful daughters, and their husbands, who are the blessings I have received: Teri and her husband, Rick; Tami and her husband, Tim; Trina and her husband, Jason. For my five wonderful grandchildren, who are the fruit of my life: Travis and Eric; Jonathan; Katie and Hanna. With their halos shining brightly, I am honored by their presence.

INTRODUCTION

One in ten children experience child sexual abuse before their 18th birthday! That means, hypothetically, in a classroom consisting of 30 children, three of those students already have been or will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. This rate is staggering. As a Christian, it is our moral obligation to protect and teach values and attitudes that will prevent children from being sexually abused, and, to encourage children to become what God intends best for a child to be when reaching adulthood. Child sexual abuse is a root cause of social problems, such as human trafficking, school delinquency, domestic violence, homelessness, teen pregnancy, health problems, substance abuse, and emotional or physical abuse. Children who are sexually abused may suffer for many years, some for the rest of their lives, with social problems.

Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children Interactive Workbook reveals 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser. The abuser could be a family member, or a person the family knows and trusts. The immediate, defensive feelings of fear, anger, and bitterness can cause pain, trauma, and confusion within the family unit. When the support of the family unit is broken, the common thread of brokenness results in emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual emptiness. It is believed, the prevalence of child sexual abuse will be significantly lessened when families are prepared to understand and discuss the facts of sexual abuse, how to talk about it, how to prevent it, how to recognize signs, and how to react responsibly.

The goal of the child sexual abuse awareness ministry project in Kent County is to ‘unbolt the door’ so the threat of child sexual abuse and its affects on the family can be confronted, and dealt with. The results of the project will show the ‘door is unbolted’ when leadership is presented with education and information on the facts, the steps to protect children from sexual abuse, and the methods of pastoral care with an emphasis on the role of forgiveness, crisis intervention, and family systems education necessary for bringing healing and improved relationships to families and victims of child sexual abuse. The child sexual abuse awareness and education ministry includes the use of Stewards of Children Interactive Workbook and video, which focuses on eight case studies providing the facts of child sexual abuse. In addition to the eight case studies presented, another video provided by Kent County domestic violence shelter of the YWCA includes studies of three teenage victims of sex trafficking in Kent County. The Synergy portion of this document in Chapter One, the Ministry Focus contains my background and experience of having been raised by an alcoholic mother and a father who emotionally, physically, and sexually abused my mother, my siblings, and myself. My family struggled with the affects of anger, fear, denial, and confusion. As a teenager, I dated a youth for a short time, and was sexually, emotionally, and physically abused. As a parent, my teenage daughters were making risky social choices leading to disregard for parental guidelines and inappropriate use of sex, alcohol, and smoking; and then, as a grandparent, two of my grandsons, were involved in sexual behavior while playing, hiding, and sneaking around. There was an investigation, and court hearings, which concluded with a sentence of counseling. Since the boys, ages twelve and five, were

legally considered children, the law treated the incident as ‘inappropriate sexual behavior.’

Regardless, the incident caused trauma, anxiety, grief, and broken relationships in our family. The following excerpt is legal information regarding the age and maturity of responsibility for criminal behavior:

The law makes a distinction between juveniles and children. In the criminal system, a person is considered to be a child when, by virtue of his or her immaturity, he or she cannot be held to be responsible for criminal behavior. A person 12 or younger is considered to be a child. Children cannot be sex offenders because they have not been convicted of a sexual crime. When children engage in sexual behaviors that would be regarded as criminal when they get older, they are described as children with sexual behavior problems.

Practical methods of a healing ministry include talking about the facts of child sexual abuse, and honest communication about the effects of anger, fear, and grief.

Healing for the victim and/or the victim’s family emphasizes forgiveness between God and themselves, not between the abuser and themselves. Healing can occur when the negative feelings of pain, anger, fear, bitterness, and confusion are given to God.

According to Edwin Friedman, author of *Generation to Generation*, clergy is in a position to foster and encourage healing. Crisis events, such as sexual abuse or inappropriate sexual behavior, are hinges on which doors can open or close.

God called me to develop a ministry of child sexual abuse awareness education, with pastoral care emphasizing forgiveness, crisis intervention, and generational family systems education to encourage healing and bring the hope of ending the cycle of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse of children within the family is a generational issue that has existed since the Old Testament Bible times. Janet Pais, author of *Suffer the Children*, says there are cases of children who suffer from sexual abuse by family members in families today. There are juvenile offenders who were sexually abused as a child by an

adult family member. Often there is little understanding or compassion for the negative affects of sexual abuse of children involving other family members.

An indication for the need of a child sexual abuse awareness ministry project is based on key findings in the report of the 2007 Kent County Congregations Study, *Gatherings of Hope, How Religious Congregations Contribute to the Quality of Life*, published in 2008. The statistics in the study show there are very few congregations who offer adult ministries focused on child sexual abuse awareness education. The church is a place where people can discuss difficult problems and find solutions, by providing pastoral care through the ministry of Jesus Christ.

The four foundational research dialogues of this document include: 1. Chapter Two, Biblical Foundations; 2. Chapter Three, Historical Foundations; 3. Chapter Four, Theological Foundations; 4. Chapter Five, Theoretical Foundations. Each of these four foundations function as four corners of the square on which this child sexual abuse awareness project is founded and built. The center of the square is the ministry focus.

Starting with Chapter Two, the Biblical Foundations begins with the Old and the New Testaments. The focus is on how King David gained political power through his marriages and the abuse of sex, resulting in broken family relationships. In 1 Samuel, Saul is king for forty-two turbulent years with many wars, when God anoints David, a shepherd boy, to become the next king. Saul challenges David's faithfulness many times. David marries Michal, Saul's daughter, but flees for his life when Saul tries to kill him. In his absence Saul gave Michal to Paltiel, then Saul and his son, Jonathan, die in battle. In time, David gains the wives of three men, including Abigail, Michal, and Bathsheba, and displacement of their three husbands Nabal, Paltiel, and Uriah. David meets Nabal (a

very rich enemy) and his wife, Abigail. After Nabal's unexpected death in his sleep, David marries Abigail. Prior to his marriage to Abigail, David had previously married Ahinoam.

When 2 Samuel begins: another son of Saul, Ishbaal, rivals David for control of Israel for seven years; David unites Israel. By this time he has taken four other wives. He demanded Michal's return to him, saying Saul had no right to give his daughter, Michal, to another man, underlining her political significance. Paltiel already had six other women. At this point, David remained in Jerusalem when his army was at battle, he saw Bathsheba, brought her to his house, and slept with her. David arranged to have her husband, Uriah, killed in battle. David was a powerful man with many wives, and Uriah, was insignificant with only one wife. The sexual abuse continues in David's family, when his son, Amnon, rapes his half sister, Tamar. Then Amnon throws her out and tells the servant to 'bolt the door.' Tamar goes to live with her brother, Absalom, and is never heard of again. This illustrates the sexual abuses of the monarchy, the political use of marriage, David's moral failings, and the family turmoil that results.

The second corner of the square is Chapter Three, the Historical Foundations of church history. 1. There is a generational pattern of unresolved issues of sexual abuse and negative family system behavior making an impact on the church, which is a family system in itself, from the time of the early theological text dated around 70 A.D.; 2. The development of John Calvin's Geneva, a city of refuge in Switzerland, for families and their children persecuted during the Protestant Reformation; 3. John Wesley's Holy Club, consisting of Oxford University students in England who prayed together and began social work with a ministry to help underprivileged urban families and a school

for their children; 4. Reports from the Roman Catholic Church that multiple priests were perpetrators in thousands of child sexual abuse cases, resulting in traumatic experiences for the victims, their families, and their churches; 5. The occurrence of han, a racial discrimination and injustice (a form of abuse) for Asian-American families, that affects the lives of many people in our society; and 6. My personal experiences with street children, while serving as the pastor of an urban church. The common thread of brokenness woven through history happens emotionally, relationally, socially, and spiritually in families affected by abuse of children. It is noted that abuse of children is generational and has been occurring for centuries.

The accomplishments of uncovering the depth of child sexual abuse in the early Catholic Church; the acknowledgement of the children of persecuted families of John Calvin's Geneva; the neglected children of poor families in John Wesley's ministry in England; the children of families suffering with the injustice of han; and, the abused and neglected children of poor families in urban church of today has unbolted the door to allow the secrets of abuse to be released and the pain of injustice to be lifted from the families of innocent children who were sexually abused, neglected, or persecuted throughout church history.

Continuing with Chapter Four, is the third corner of the square, the Theological Foundation. The focus is on theological reflection we encounter in God's Word in our lives. The church is a safe place for people to open their lives and receive God's grace, love, and hope for a better future. "Anthropology is the study of the nature of humanity, sin, and grace. The theology of anthropology includes: 1. Humanity was created in the image of God, to be innocent and holy; 2. Sin is a decision to turn away from God to the

material world, thus, breaking a relationship between humans and God; and 3. All humans are forgiven through God's grace freely given." We make a decision to respond in trust and obedience to the grace of God. Each of us is given a choice when and how to respond to God's gift of grace, or to turn away from God. "The definition of sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, nature, or attitude, such as sexual abuse." Sexual abuse is generational. In family systems it causes brokenness. Christ is the divine physician by "whose wounds we are healed"...Isaiah 53:5. "Humanity is healed by the grace of God so the mind may recognize God and the will may respond to the divine offer of grace." Grace is God's generous and unmerited attention to humanity, forgiveness by which this process of healing may begin. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus humanity is forgiven and God gives humanity salvation.

Next, the fourth corner is Chapter Five, the Theoretical Foundations. This chapter reveals resources and methods from other disciplines to 'unbolt the door' to child sexual abuse, the generational patterns of behavior causing a breakdown in family systems and how they can be improved and healed. Darkness to Light, a national organization raises awareness and educates adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. According to Childhelp, another national organization, children are suffering from an epidemic of child abuse. Statistics show it is estimated that five children die every day in our nation as a result of abuse. Children whose parents abuse alcohol or other drugs are three times more likely to be abused. Child abuse can occur at every socioeconomic level across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education. In one study, 80% of twenty one year olds who reported childhood abuse met the criteria for at least one psychological disorder. In 2008 alone,

lifetime estimates of lost worker productivity, health care costs, special education costs, child welfare expenditure and criminal justice expenditures added up to \$124 billion.¹

When there is less money available for kids who live in poverty, the necessity to drop out of school is an option in order to survive economically. When there are no jobs available, these kids become street kids where they are vulnerable to gangs or crime. Statistics show that one out of four children in Michigan lives in poverty. 42% of children raised in poverty stay in poverty as adults.² Without the church ministry, the future is bleak for many of these children, especially for those who are oppressed and live in broken families where poverty, and abusive situations exist and there is no way to leave, change, or improve their living conditions.

There are two sexual abuse crimes that affect children and adults in our communities and have become prevalent sources of income for the offenders. Specifically, one is the use of pornography, internet or published material, which has a harmful impact on the emotional, mental and sexual health of young children. It teaches children and adults about sex without love, intimacy, responsibility, and commitment. The second sexual abuse crime on the rise is sex trafficking, which is the exploitation of people of any age for sex. Sex trafficking is a business that generates billions of dollars a year, and victims are trapped physically, psychologically, financially, or emotionally.

The combination of the four foundational research dialogues provides the structural formation of the project design, the model of ministry, and the content of the curriculum. The foundations are linked to this project as they present a basis for

¹ Childhelp, Founded in 1959 by Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Fedderson, "For Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse", accessed March 3, 2016, <http://childhelp-usa.com/pages/statistics>.

² State of Opportunity Project, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://stateofopportunitymichiganradio.org/term/research>.

implementing the child sexual abuse awareness ministry project. The common thread through each of the four foundational dialogues is brokenness of families affected when children are involved in sexual abuse. The negative affects on members of the family, such as, anger, grief, and fear can cause anxiety and a breakdown of relationships, and the brokenness becomes generational in the family system. When someone speaks up and there is intervention, just like dominoes, the pieces will tumble. When one person in the family system changes, the other people will change, and then the circumstances will change.

The sixth chapter of this document contains the project analysis and includes the results of the child sexual abuse awareness ministry project, and subsequent teaching of the awareness ministry to the students attending the seminary connected with the Christian university. The results of the pre and post survey questions, the interviews with the ministry project participants and the seminary students, and the observations of the outcome of the ministry project are analyzed. In addition, the observations of two of the professional Doctor of Ministry associates who attended the ministry project and the seminary presentation are included. The outcome of the analysis proves the hypothesis was supported and the project worked. The conclusion tells what I have learned and what I would do differently. Some suggestions or considerations for future development are given. When the door has been unbolted the Word is spoken. As in Isaiah 61:1, “The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives...to comfort all those who mourn.”

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Statistics taken from Darkness to Light, a national non-profit organization, show “one in ten children experience child sexual abuse before their 18th birthday. This rate (one in ten children) reflects physical contacts only.” Information learned from Darkness to Light’s Stewards of Children Interactive Workbook tells: “Child sexual abuse is a root cause of social problems such as human trafficking, delinquency, violent crime, homelessness, teen pregnancy, health problems, substance abuse, and emotional or physical abuse. Child sexual abuse happens in any family and can be committed by an adult, or by another youth, regardless of environment, race, religion, or economic class, 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser.” These facts and statistics point out the importance in taking steps to protect children. The workbook explains the facts of child sexual abuse; how to set boundaries that will minimize the opportunity for sexual abuse to happen; how to openly talk about it; how to recognize the signs of sexual abuse, and react responsibly to the signs, such as intervention and reporting suspicious behavior. The abuser could be a family member, or an unrelated person the family knows and trusts. The abuser could be a well-known, respected citizen, or a youth who may have been abused by another youth. Having a support system, such as a clergy, a counselor, or a support group where there is open communication with other adults who are encouraging one another can help parents to recognize the signs

when there is any behavior of risk to the safety of a child, and how to respond, including intervention and reporting. In my synergy I will share my personal experience with emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in my family throughout my childhood, and adulthood, then as a parent, and a grandparent.

According to the Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, December 2009, “When children are involved in sexual abuse, the support of the family unit is broken, and the common thread of brokenness results in emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual emptiness for each person in the family.” Some parents and other family members don’t know or understand the facts of child sexual abuse, nor do they know how to talk about it, how to prevent it, and how to responsibly respond, including intervention and reporting. Parents are unprepared when a crisis of child sexual abuse happens. From personal experience when my grandchildren, ages 5 and 12, were involved in sexual abuse, specifically called ‘inappropriate touching,’ I was a pastor of a church, and I was also chairperson of the Abuse Prevention Team for the church conference. Because I had experienced abuse as a child, the anxiety and fear caused by the crisis of sexual abuse involving my grandchildren was familiar. There was not a ministry in the church providing child sexual abuse education or pastoral care. The relationship of my two daughters and their husbands was affected when their sons were involved in sexual abuse. A report was made to the police; there were court hearings and counseling. My experience when living in the trauma of abuse as a child was loneliness and confusion. God has prepared me to serve a ministry of awareness focusing on the role of education with protecting children and the role of forgiveness in providing pastoral care for families with children involved in sexual abuse.

Synergy

My background and experience with child sexual abuse began as a child, living with my alcoholic mother; she dropped out of school at age sixteen, and my dad, who had an angry, raging, violent temper. He was emotionally, physically, and sexually abusive within our family home. To the outside world the image of our family appeared to be positive as the family members attended church, school, and jobs without drawing any negative attention. However, as Dr. Emma Justes describes in her book, *Please Don't Tell*, the truth about what was happening inside our home was a secret that no one in our family would tell. The family home environment was filled with my dad's abusive power control and trauma having an effect on our family every day. As the oldest of three siblings, I felt responsible to protect my mother, younger brother, and sister from dad's abuse. I was convinced I could save my family. In her book, *Codependent No More*, author, Melody Beattie, describes codependency as 'when people are tormented by other people's behavior.'¹ For many years our family remained enmeshed in the generational pattern of abuse and survival. I was aware that my mother's dad was an alcoholic, often was unemployed, and homeless. Two of my mother's siblings dropped out of school as teenagers, moved out of state, and never returned to the family. As a child, in order to escape the trauma in my home, I depended on denial, confusion, and avoidance. Without any available counseling support, I would simply 'check out' and emotionally detach. I watched my mother emotionally detach by staring out the window as if her mind was somewhere in the sky instead of in her head. Or, another way she

¹ Melody Beattie *Codependent No More* (New York, NY: Hazelden, 1987).

detached was to carry on an imaginary conversation as if there was someone else in the room. Either way, through detachment the issues causing brokenness in our family did not need to be dealt with. According to Dr. Emma Justes, “maintaining secrecy and an inability to see circumstances in a different way compounded the potential for continuing violence and abuse.”² As a little child, when I was afraid or anxious, I would withdraw and walk to the nearby church where it was peaceful and quiet. I did not feel safe in my home, but I sensed Jesus was in the church and he would protect me. In Luke 18:16 Jesus says, ‘let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belong.’ In Matthew 18:5-6 Jesus says ‘whoever welcomes a child in my name welcomes me. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.’ Jesus puts a high priority on the safety and protection of children, and on including children in worship and ministry. He has called us to do the same in our churches.

I lived on the edge of fear every day, waking during the night as my dad raged at my mother for hours. The next day no one would talk about it. When I came home from school each day, I would find my mother lying on the couch asleep with several empty beer bottles lying on the floor, and the television blasting with noise. My dad would take my brother down the basement steps and beat him with a strap that hung on a hook under the steps everyday when he came home from school.

When my little sister was born I was eleven years old, and she slept in a bed (they used to call them seven year cribs) next to my parents’ bed. My brother and I had

² Emma J. Justes, *Please Don’t Tell, What to Do With the Secrets People Share* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014).

bedrooms of our own. My dad continued to rage during the night and my mother would leave their bedroom and sleep on the couch in the living room where it was quiet.

I met my first husband when we were both high school students. He dropped out of school at age sixteen, and found employment. His dad was a compulsive gambler and lost his mechanic business. His twelve year old brother was removed from their home for breaking windows on cars parked on the street with a baseball bat and other destructive behavior, and was institutionalized in a psychiatric hospital. His older brother dropped out of school and married. His family was broken and his parents divorced.

When I graduated from high school, my dad purchased forty acres of property outside of the city and had their house moved to the property. When my sister was in elementary school, she ran away and hid in the woods on the property for several days before the police used a dog to search and find her. The police returned her to our house and nothing changed. There was no explanation about why she ran away. As I got older, I lived in denial and confusion, and I escaped the trauma by leaving the family house, and returning later. I believed if I were quiet and did not talk, then things would improve.

I married three years after my graduation. Four years later my husband and I had a house constructed next to my parents, and moved in along with our two children, ages two and four years. I thought I could protect my mother, brother, and sister from my dad's abuse and save my family. My mother adored my children and she was happy to have us there.

It was quiet living next door to my parents for a while, then the turmoil started again when my dad decided to raise quarter horses, and my sister rode and showed them in horse shows during her high school years. My husband would assist my dad in taking

care of the horses. When a horse would not obey my dad he would beat it with a board.

My parents took my sister to horse shows across the state every weekend. My sister entered horse-riding contests for years and won many trophies. When my sister would not obey my dad and perform with the horse exactly the way he told her to, he would beat her with a horsewhip, and she suffered with severe wounds.

After her graduation, my sister married and my dad helped her husband build a house on my dad's homestead property; later, my dad helped my brother build a house on the property also. To the outside world the image of my parents, each of my siblings, and me all living in our own homes on my dad's homestead property appeared to be peaceful and wonderful. However, the truth about the continuing abuse in my parents' home remained a secret and the violence continued.

In my home, located next to my parents' my marriage began to struggle. I realized my husband's values and priorities were different than mine. There were parental responsibility issues regarding our teenagers; money management issues; religious beliefs; and moral issues. The pattern of anger and abuse was causing anxiety, fear, depression, a lack of trust, and withdrawal in our family relationships. Our teenage daughters were making poor choices with peers; there was disrespect for curfews and rules, unsupervised parties and activities with boys, alcohol, smoking, and drugs. While helping our youngest daughter deliver a door-to-door newspaper route, I fell and shattered my ankle. After surgery, I was unable to walk for a year. During this time major changes were made. Counseling and reconciliation for our marriage was not successful, and consequently there was a divorce. Our family was broken and everyone suffered emotionally.

In my brokenness, I looked for care and support and I found them in one-on-one counseling, a church choir, and an Al-Anon support group for the family and friends of an alcoholic. With counseling and a support group, the door was unbolted, and I was able to begin a journey of awareness, forgiveness, and healing. My two older daughters graduated from high school and moved away. I lived in my home as a single parent with one minor daughter, however, the abuse and violence continued next door. I gave my dad an ultimatum to either begin counseling to deal with his abusive behavior or I would break my relationship with him. He refused to agree, so I sold my house, and moved to a new home. Both of my older daughters returned to see me and we reconciled our relationships. I separated from my parents' and my siblings' homestead for twenty years. During that time my dad continued his abusive, violent behavior with my mother and became involved in an amorous relationship with another woman. My mother became ill with cancer and she died following surgery. I loved my mother, regardless of her faults, and I grieved over the loss. Mostly, I regretted that we were never able to reconcile our relationship. Sometime later, I had a dream one night. I saw Jesus in a garden sitting near a tree, with my mother sitting at his feet on the ground. Jesus spoke to me, and said, "You don't have to worry about your mom anymore. She is with me now. I'm taking care of her." I felt as though a heavy burden of guilt I carried since I was a child had been lifted off my back. I knew I was forgiven, and, the guilt of not being able to protect her was gone. I could forgive her; I could forgive others; I could let go, and let God. Later, it was revealed to me my dad began a second amorous relationship with another woman, having two relationships with two women at the same time. With the grace of God, it was time for me to move on.

When separating from the family homestead, I physically moved away from my old life, and a new door was unbolted. This was a time of spiritual renewal. I was in my new home one week when I met a man, and two years later we were married. My family increased with the marriages of my three daughters and the birth of five grandchildren. I retired from my employment with the public schools, enrolled in a local college university, and after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts, I joined my husband's heritage church (founded by his great uncle) where I felt called by God into ministry. I enrolled in seminary, and was assigned to an urban church in a declining neighborhood as the lead pastor. I graduated from seminary with my Masters of Divinity. The urban church was located in Kent County, five miles from where I lived as a child. When I began my tenure as a pastor, the church only had a few children. I was successful in partnership with two other churches in establishing two community gardens in the neighborhood, by improving two empty lots. While walking through the garden next to the church, I met two children who were eating vegetables because they were hungry. I invited them into the Sunday morning free breakfast and the next week they came back for breakfast. That was the beginning of a children's ministry established for elementary children, grades kindergarten through fifth, living in the surrounding area of the Kent County church where I served as pastor. The children came from poor or low income single parent homes in the declining neighborhood. They came without an adult, and were unsupervised while playing on the streets on Sunday mornings. Never having been inside a church building was a new experience for them. Some of them were scared at first, because they didn't know what to expect. Each week ten to twenty kids would line up outside waiting anxiously for the doors to be unbolted. They were eager to be there for

breakfast, then participate in the opening of worship, and head upstairs with two teachers who taught them music, listen to Bible stories, play games, and create something with art or craft. It was exciting to see how God was sending these children to a place where they wanted to learn about Jesus, and what was going on in this church. This was an opportunity for congregation members to become spiritual mentors to children, especially for children who needed time for attention, to get to know the congregation, to share their feelings with someone who could be trusted, and to invite a parent to connect with ministry offering pastoral care and support for adult family members, especially those struggling with brokenness. Unfortunately, my tenure was up, and one year after I retired, the worshipping congregation was closed and the children's ministry was dissolved. I was disappointed because I felt the work God was doing in the church was destroyed.

While I was the pastor, there was another crisis of abuse in my family, occurring at our family summer cottage, while my husband and I were gone away. Two of my grandchildren were involved in an incident, legally called, 'inappropriate touching.' This caused trauma for the two boys, who were cousins, ages five and twelve, and their parents. The crisis happened at the end of a vacation. The children were playing when the parents were packing their belongings and preparing to leave and go home. A report was made to the authorities; there were court hearings, and counseling. The family was broken, and everyone suffered.

The findings of the data analysis completed in *The Report on the 2007 Congregational Study conducted by the Center for Social Research* showed there were very few sex education or sexual abuse pastoral care ministries offered in congregations in Kent County, indicating an undeveloped area of ministry.

The purpose of the proposed project is to offer a child sexual abuse awareness and pastoral care ministry where adults can learn facts about sexual abuse, can discuss them, and learn what it takes to protect children and how to make a difference. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, taught us, 'the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

Through research, the 'Unbolt the Door' model of ministry was developed as a two-fold awareness project. The focus of the first part of the project: using a video consisting of four case studies of adults who were sexually abused as children, along with a workbook called *Stewards of Children* lay leaders and clergy are equipped with an awareness of the facts of child sexual abuse, how to minimize opportunity, what the signs are, and how to react responsibly, including intervention and reporting. The focus of the second part of the project: using the workbook and video consisting of another four case studies of adults who were sexually abused as children; along with presentations of the family systems theory, methods of emotional and spiritual pastoral support with an emphasis on forgiveness through God's grace and how it works to bring healing and improved relationships to members of the broken family. The family experiences a sense of extreme inadequacy and loneliness. Every situation is unique, but the feelings are the same.

The goal of the project: When clergy, seminary students, and faith leadership in any church congregation is equipped with education about the facts of child sexual abuse, how to talk about it, recognize the signs, and react responsibly, then the 'door will be unbolted!' The church leadership will be equipped to provide a ministry of education for protection and prevention of child sexual abuse. The common thread of brokenness in

family relationships occurring when a child is involved in sexual abuse will be addressed enabling faith leadership to offer pastoral care, with the emphasis on forgiveness through God's grace bringing healing and improved relationships to members of broken families when children are involved in sexual abuse. Jesus taught us to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Forgiving those who have hurt us is an issue between God and ourselves. We cannot be right with God if we refuse to forgive others. The Aramaic word for forgiveness is to 'lift' or 'carry away'. When we forgive others, God's grace lifts our burden, and carries it away, replacing it with healing. Our relationship with God is not dependent on the abuser. The abuser is responsible for their own relationship with God, and their own healing.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Shalom! The introduction to the Biblical Foundations presents two chosen scriptures. First, the problem is found in the Old Testament scripture chosen: 2 Samuel 13:17 states, “But he would not listen to her. He called the young man who served him and said, put this woman out of my presence, and ‘bolt the door’ after her.” Thus, this is where the title of the ministry project, ‘Unbolt the Door’ originates. This indicates when the door was bolted, Tamar was not allowed to return and defend herself, and she remained exiled from the family.

Second, the solution is found in the New Testament, God sends Jesus with the solution to the problem. In the chosen scripture, Matthew 6:12-13, Jesus prays, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” The emphasis is placed on the role of forgiveness when providing care to families whose children have been involved in child sexual abuse.

The theme of the proposed healing ministry project is two-fold: first, to equip adults with the facts about the prevalence of child sexual abuse, and the steps to protect children; then, to provide care to families emphasizing forgiveness leading to inner healing and improved relationships when child sexual abuse occurs. There are negative repercussions for members of families when children are involved in sexual abuse. When

the support of the family is broken, the common thread of brokenness results in emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual emptiness for each person in the family.¹

Briefly, 2 Samuel 13:17 is a story of sexual abuse in the Royal Family involving King David's first born son, Amnon, Amnon's half-sister, Tamar, and David's second son, Absalom. Amnon raped Tamar, then threw her out, and "bolted the door" behind her. Tamar went to live with her brother, Absalom, and was never heard of again.

Then, in Matthew 6:12-13, God sent a savior, Jesus Christ, to offer forgiveness of sins bringing healing to broken families.

When the disciples ask Jesus how to pray, he answers with "The Lord's Prayer." The Lord specifically explains they are to ask for forgiveness of their debts as they have forgiven the debts of others.

The laws protecting, loving, and caring for women are found in Deuteronomy 22, including laws against sexual assault or violation, and sexual relations involving at least one partner who is married to someone else are discussed. In the Old Testament these were considered serious crimes, and were punishable by death. The psychological and emotional effects of adultery or rape can destroy an individual, the family relationships, and the society.²

When child sexual abuse occurs, everyone in the family is affected. The following excerpt defines "family."

The Journal of Family Ministry features an article on healing family violence and sexual abuse. The author defines family as a group of persons connected by legal

¹ Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, accessed March 10, 2015, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* December, 2009.

² M. H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*, (London, England: 2009), accessed October 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

and relational commitments; expectations of mutual care; temporary inequality in the mutuality of care due to developmental differences such as childhood and old age; affection and trust; a context of safe physical and emotional intimacy and vulnerability to each other. Violence and sexual abuse is a major public health crisis in the U.S. that has been allowed to flourish because of remarkable silence on the part of civic and religious leaders. 38% of girls and 17.3% of boys experience sexual abuse prior to the age of eighteen. Family violence and sexual abuse in faith communities has been subject to “holy hush.” Yet, healing is especially assisted by rightly naming abuse in its various forms, compassionately assisting those who are victimized, confronting those who perpetrate violence or sexual abuse in behalf of their repentance and renewal, and educating all the community. When home is not a safe place for a child, the world itself is hostile rather than a gift that discloses the abundance of God’s creative love.³

An exegesis of the events that occur surrounding these Old & New Testament scripture stories, as well as the details, will be presented in this section. In conclusion, a summary of the Biblical Foundations will be covered.

The Biblical Foundations of this paper begins with a greeting, Shalom!

Interestingly, the word Shalom is used in Israel both to greet and to say goodbye. The simplest translation is peace. Shalom appears about 250 times in the Old Testament, and the meaning includes wholeness, health, or the completeness God intends for our world. The author of *Sexual Abuse, a Pastoral Response* says, “Sexual abuse seeks to destroy sexual shalom (meaning the sexual health, harmony, and wholeness intended by God.) The catastrophic event such as sexual abuse affects the functioning of the whole system (not just the individuals who are directly involved in the abuse itself) the victim, the offender, and the family, as well as the church congregation.”⁴

³ Nancy J. Ramsey, “Confronting Family Violence and its Spiritual Damage,” *Journal of Family Ministry* 20, no. 3, (Fall, 2006): 28-40, accessed October 10, 2015, ATLA Religion database with ATLA serials, EBSCO host.

⁴ Len Hedges-Godettl, and Daniel G. Bagby, ed., *Sexual Abuse, Pastoral Responses* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 107-108.

According to Tiffany & Ringe, the authors of *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap*, the word “family” may conjure images of good times and security for many, while for others it evokes feelings of pain and abuse. It is important when providing pastoral care to focus on forgiveness bringing healing to families and to understand what is common in experiences of the communicators and the receivers.⁵ In addition, in child sexual abuse situations, the characteristics of other existing circumstances have to be considered, such as: one person having power over another, and the culture, race, values, or morals of the persons involved. Also, the psychological reactions, such as: shame and guilt or anger, denial, bargaining, depression, and acceptance? Consider, also, the potentially debilitating consequences for the emotional, spiritual, and relational well being of those family members affected.

Originally, 1-2 Samuel was one book in the Old Testament, whereby the prophet, Samuel, carried messages from the Lord and the book was written to account for the rise of the monarchy in Israel. In 1 Samuel, the monarchy in Israel was formed and established. The questions of leadership and a place to worship were the two main concerns:

A major purpose of Samuel is to define monarchy as a gracious gift of God to his chosen people. Their desire for a king (1 Samuel 8:5) was not in itself inappropriate. Nor were they necessarily wrong in wanting a king like ‘all the other nations’ had (1 Samuel 8:6). Their sin consisted in the fact that they were asking for a king “to lead us and to go out before us and to fight our battles” (1 Samuel 8:20). In other words, they refused to believe that the Lord would grant them victory in his own time and according to the Lord’s own good pleasure (in contrast to 2 Samuel 8:6,14). They were willing to exchange humble faith in the

⁵ Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 26-27.

protection and power of the Lord Almighty (1 Samuel 1:3) for misguided reliance on the strength of the fighting men of Israel (2 Samuel 24:4).⁶

The Lord anointed Saul the first king of the monarchy of Israel, however, Saul had a hard time being faithful to the Lord's commands. Saul was impatient and wanted to do things his own way. When the Lord said to wait seven days until offering sacrifices, he struggled because he saw his troops deserting. Samuel warned Saul that the Lord was not pleased with his lack of faith. Throughout the forty-two year reign of Saul, there were many wars with enemies, such as the Ammonites, the Philistines, and near the end of 1 Samuel, the Amalekites. God anointed David, a shepherd boy, to become the next king. Saul knew that David would become a king who would handle things differently than him because, as a young person, David had shown he would strive to be faithful to the Lord, however, Saul challenged David's faithfulness many times. David marries Michal, Saul's daughter, but flees for his life when Saul tries to kill him. For David the marriage was a political move to gain power. While enlisting more soldiers to enlarge his troops, David encounters Nabal, a rich, harsh man and Nabal's wife Abigail, a wise, beautiful woman. Nabal refuses to recompense David's men for the protection given his shepherds, then Nabal dies with a heart attack during the night; ten days later David asks Abigail to be his wife; David previously married another woman, Abinoam; both were his wives, as well as Michal (Saul's daughter); at this point David was married to three women at the same time. Saul and his son, Jonathan, die while in battle with the

⁶ Ronald F. Youngblood, *Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, Vol. 3, 1&2 Samuel (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 555.

Philistines.⁷ David wrote a lament telling of his distress concerning Saul and Jonathan's deaths. He referred to loving Jonathan like a brother. Even though David and Saul had differences in the past, it was with compassion David acknowledged the end of Saul's reign, and the beginning of a struggle for a new king to reign over Israel.

1 Samuel ends and 2 Samuel begins with the deaths of Saul and his son, Jonathan. David is faced with competition for the reign. Another son of Saul, Ishbaal, rivals David for control of Israel for seven years; David successfully unites Israel; the Ark of the Covenant is brought to Jerusalem, which became the center of worship for the nation. David has struggles with moral failings, and family turmoil. The struggles David went through to become the King of Israel, his dependence on God, his love for his family, and his loyalty to his country were significant in his life. Yet, due to a lack of faithfulness to God, David sins and suffers the results; Even though David was a powerful leader, he abused the monarchy as it related to the abuse of sex. During the course of his career, he had multiple wives, at the same time.⁸ Even though David loved God, David was not faithful to God when he committed sins of lust, adultery, and murder causing a broken relationship with God, as well as a distressing relationship with his family and his soldiers. And the secrets remained.

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle. David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravished the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof and he saw a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, "This is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite." So David sent messengers to

⁷ John Kessler, "Sexuality and Politics: The Motif of the Displaced Husband in the Books of Samuel" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62, no. 3, (July 2000): 409-423, accessed October 10, 2015, ATLA Religion database with ATLA serials, EBSCO host.

⁸ Kessler, 409-23.

get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. She was purifying herself after her period). Then she returned to her house. The woman conceived, and she sent and told David, “I am pregnant.” (2 Samuel 11:1-5).

In 2 Samuel 11:1-5 it would have been appropriate for David, as the King, to accompany his army in battle, but instead he stayed at his house where he and Bathsheba were tempted and committed adultery (consensual sex). Even though David loved God he sinned and drifted from God’s grace.

One is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:14-15) This tells a lot about David’s state of mind, and his ability to be obedient to God’s commandments when he was distracted.

When Bathsheba announced to David that she was pregnant, David attempts to trick Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, to appear as though Uriah was the father, and when that failed he asked Joab, his army commander, to send Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah the Hittite, into battle. At David’s request, Uriah was put in the front line with soldiers in a battle to defend the capital Rabbah, where Uriah was killed. David was a powerful man with many wives and Uriah was an insignificant man with only one wife. The relationship between Uriah and Bathsheba is portrayed as tender and intimate. Israel’s King David is portrayed as the embodiment of deceit and self-interest. This is an illustration of the sexual abuses of the monarchy as it relates to the use of political marriage.⁹ David and Bathsheba were married, and the prophet Nathan told David in 2 Samuel 12:11-14, “The Lord said, I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house...The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die; but, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die.” This is a

⁹ Kessler, 409-23.

complicated story within the royal family, which becomes interwoven with sins of lust, sexual abuse, adultery, murder, and the tragic death of an innocent baby within the family was kept a secret.

According to Ms. Melton, author of *Safe Sanctuaries*, one of the ways sexual abuse occurs is when there is sexual contact between an adult or another older or more powerful youth and a younger child. The younger child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact or such sexual acts. The older child is always responsible for committing the sexual offense. Often, the younger child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the offender of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.¹⁰

In Exodus 34:7 God keeps steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sins, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting (examining) the (iniquity) sinfulness or injustice of the parents upon the children to the third and fourth generation. Some sinful activity is passed on from generation to generation.¹¹

The study of the Old Testament scripture, 2 Samuel 13:1-22, focuses on the impact of sexual abuse involving David's children. Amnon arranged for his half sister, Tamar, to be left alone with him. Amnon was in bed and pretended to be ill. Tamar was asked to prepare food to feed to Amnon. Then Amnon positioned Tamar to lay with him. In 2 Samuel 13:12-13 Tamar said, "No, do not force me for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile! As for me, where could I carry my shame? As for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel." Tamar begged Amnon to go to his father, King David, and ask to be married to her, which would have been acceptable. According to the Wesley Study Bible, marriage between half-siblings would have been allowed, because royal families throughout history have often had close relatives marry

¹⁰ Joy Thornberg Melton, *Safe Sanctuaries, Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2011), 30.

¹¹ C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, T. C. Butler and B. Latta (Eds.) *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), accessed October 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

in order to keep power and authority centralized. Amnon would not listen to Tamar, so he raped her. Then his lust and love turned into violence and hatred, and he ordered her out. He told the servant to “bolt the door” behind her. The purpose of securing doors is all too often to prevent or conceal a questionable or evil deed. Tamar was disgraced and desolate. She went to live with her brother, Absalom.¹² Since Tamar was the daughter of King David, 2 Samuel 13:18-19 states she tore the long robe she was wearing that designated her as a virgin daughter of the king, put her hand on her head and went away crying.

When David heard about the sexual abuse that happened involving his children, 2 Samuel 13:21 says he became very angry. The result of David’s sin of adultery with Bathsheba became evident in his relations with his sons, for how can a father discipline his children when he knows that he has done worse than they? When Amnon raped Tamar and threw her out, even though David was very angry, he took no action. He had also committed a sexual offense.¹³ David was not willing to face the truth of the sexual abuse he had committed. The denial, fear, and secrecy of David’s sexual abuse with Bathsheba caused a breakdown of relationships with each person in the royal family. It is important to be aware that sexual abuse within the family unit is a generational issue, as observed in the Bible. Sexual abuse is not new or unique to the present day. Absalom was very angry about the rape of his sister, Tamar, and the fact that their father, King David, never punished Amnon.

According to Dr. Emma Justes, “David’s story ends without the secrets being faced. Maintaining secrecy and an inability to see circumstances in a new way

¹² Youngblood, 954-5-6.

¹³ Paul J. Achtemeir and Elizabeth, *The Old Testament Roots of our Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979), 94.

compound the potential for continued violence and destruction. The threat of their exposure drives David and his sons to do whatever was necessary to avoid disclosure of their secrets. When shame demands our silence, we fail to reach for the hope that is possible in our lives.”¹⁴

Author, Joy Melton says, “Christians derive their heritage from the experience of the Hebrews in the stories told in the historical scriptures of the Old Testament.”¹⁵ The story of sexual abuse found in 2 Samuel 11-14 is a lesson for today’s generation.

God had anointed David as king over Israel, and rescued him from death by Saul. The Lord gave him Saul’s wives, and the house of Israel. Then David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and when she became pregnant, he had her husband, Uriah, killed. David took Uriah’s wife to be his wife. In 2 Samuel 12:11-14 the Lord said, “I will raise up trouble against you from within your house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sin. For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel. Then Nathan said to David, “The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die; but the child that is born to you shall die.”

Another lesson for today is found in Hebrews 12:15, “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

Following the sexual abuse involving David’s children, Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom, the story in 2 Samuel 13 continues with Absalom’s desire for revenge against Amnon. Absalom bides his time saying nothing even though he hated Amnon. After two years, Absalom determines that the time is ripe to avenge the rape of his sister Tamar.

Then Absalom commanded his servants, “Watch when Amnon’s heart is merry with wine and when I say to you, “Strike Amnon,” then kill him. Do not be afraid, have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant. So the servants of Absalom were commanded. Then all of the king’s sons rose and each mounted his mule and fled (2 Samuel 13:28-29).

¹⁴ Justes, 133

¹⁵ Melton, 7.

Absalom chooses sheepshearing, a festive season, for the murder of his brother Amnon. In parallel, as the sheep of Absalom would lose their wool, so David's first-born son, Amnon, the potential shepherd of Israel, would lose his life.

Author, David Gunn, wrote a summary for the *Journal For the Study of the Old Testament*, that gives his interpretation of the story in 2 Samuel of King David's sexual abuse that turned into murder, and ironically, his son's murder two years after he sexually abused his half-sister. Gunn says, "Clearly we are expected to see in Chapter 13, a recapitulation of what had gone before in Chapter 11. David had seen a beautiful woman, had taken her and lain with her; then, in order to prevent discovery through the birth of an obviously illegitimate child he had attempted to trick the husband into a false paternity, and, failing this had finally engaged in an intrigue, which led to her husband, Uriah's death. Amnon, David's son desires a beautiful girl who is his half-sister, he conspires to trick her into a position where he can seize and lie with her, but in retrospect, Amnon is conspired against and murdered by his brother, Absalom. David finds, coming to expression within his own family, the elements of his own earlier experience...his sin has come home to roost."¹⁶

Unfortunately, David did nothing to bring justice to the situation of sexual abuse within the family and tragic broken relationships of his two sons and his daughter. Absalom was angry and bitter about the rape of his sister, Tamar, and the fact that Amnon was never confronted or punished for what he had done. Amnon wanted to be rid of Tamar after he raped her, so he ordered the servant to throw her out and "bolt the door" to conceal the questionable, evil deed.¹⁷ Tamar could live with her brother, Absalom, and the secret of the sexual abuse would be kept within the family. Absalom was silent for two years, and then he killed Amnon to avenge the rape of his sister, Tamar.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Publication on Juvenile Justice reports youth constitute more than one in four sex offenders and

¹⁶ David M. Gunn, "Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* S6 Sheffield: JSOT (1978) accessed October 10, 2015, ATLA religion database with ATLA serials, EBSCO host.

¹⁷ Youngblood, 956.

juveniles perpetrate more than one in three sex offenses against other youth. Young children are victims of the same crimes that victimize adults, and are subject to other crimes like child physical, or emotional abuse and neglect. The impact of these crimes can be devastating, and eventually, the violent or sexual victimization of children can lead to a generational cycle of violence and abuse. Interestingly, clinical follow-up studies demonstrate that a large majority of sex-offending youth has no arrests or reports for future sex crimes.

As researchers study data in conjunction with clinical sample data, the information gained will assist prevention and intervention planning substantially. Data concludes that sex offenses committed by juveniles often occur in the home, but are more likely to occur away from the home.¹⁸

When sexual abuse happens, the support of the family unit is broken, and all members are affected. The pain, anger, and bitterness are not resolved. There is a lack of respect and acceptance of other family members and innocent people are hurt. Without apologies, forgiveness is difficult, and therefore, reconciliation and healing cannot occur. There is no justice or mercy. In the Old Testament there was a deeply rooted legacy of justice and mercy, as recorded in Micah 6:8, “The Lord has shown you what is good and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Isaiah 1:17 says, “Stop doing wrong, learn to do right, seek justice, encourage the oppressed.” Justice, mercy, hospitality, and generosity were a part of the covenant the

¹⁸ Office of Justice Programs, Office Of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, December, 2009, accessed March 3, 2015.

people of the Old Testament made with God, and as Christians in the New Testament, we continue to live in a covenant relationship with God and with others.¹⁹

In the Old Testament there were great problems of faithlessness, adultery, sexual abuse, murder, and family brokenness as shown in 2 Samuel 11-13. In the New Testament Jesus brought forgiveness as the solution to the problems. In Isaiah 53:5, the prophet says, “He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole and by his bruises we are healed.” Our physical healing is the result of the Servant’s willingness to carry our punishment and suffer for our sins. Healing happens through forgiveness.²⁰

In Matthew 6 Jesus taught his followers the Lord’s Prayer. The first three petitions stand independently from one another. The last three are linked in Greek by “ands,” as if to say that life sustained by food is not enough. We also need forgiveness of sin and deliverance from temptation. The request for forgiveness of debts or sins was traditional in Judaism.²¹ As a tax collector, Matthew was familiar with people owing debts that they were unable to pay. The consequence for not paying a debt was imprisonment and sometimes even torture. In Matthew 6:12:5 Jesus teaches how to pray for forgiveness of sin in the Lord’s Prayer devoid of the “empty phrases” and “many words” that characterize the prayers of the “hypocrites” in Matthew 6:5. The Lord’s Prayer is presented as a model the disciples and all who follow Jesus are to approximate

¹⁹ Melton, 7.

²⁰ Isaiah 53:5, “Biblical Studies Press” *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*, 2006, accessed March 10, 2015, exported from Logos Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

²¹ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 172.

in formulating their prayers.²² In Matthew 6:12, a spiritual longing of the children of God is presented in the light of the existing relation between humans and God. The petitions are: and, forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors. At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus explains in Matthew 6:14-15 that the offer of divine forgiveness is emphatically connected with the need for humans to forgive each other in order to be forgiven. The need to forgive others is the only facet of his teaching deemed so important that he tells his followers to remind themselves of it every time they pray.²³

As a whole, the Lord's Prayer contains the deep longing after the kingdom of God, which forms the substance of all the prayers of the children of God, emphasizing forgiveness of our debts as we forgive others.²⁴ Jesus uses many parables as examples of the significance of God's forgiveness, and healing. Aramaic is the language that Jesus spoke. It is the language of the poor people. In the Aramaic English translation taken from Logos Bible Software, Matthew 6:14 says: "For if you forgive the children of men their faults, your father who is in heaven will also forgive your faults."

We are all God's children. According to Romans 8:14, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God." Adoption as God's children is received through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and based on faith in Jesus Christ.²⁵ Galatians 3:26 says,

²² M. A. Powell, ed. *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2011), 250, accessed March 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

²³ M. A. Powell, 250.

²⁴ J. P. Lange & P. A. Schaff, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Matthew* (Bellingham, WA: 2008), 172-3, accessed March 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

²⁵ C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendemen, T. C. Butler, and B. Latta, eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 54, accessed March 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

“For in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith.” Christians share a union with God and one another.²⁶

1 John 3:1 says, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” According to author Matthew West, in his book, *Forgiveness, Overcoming the Impossible*, “Greater than our greatest mistakes and even better than our best achievements is the message of God’s forgiveness: it can drown out the voice of sin.”²⁷ Matthew West has recorded a song, “I am no longer a slave to sin, I am a child of God,” and Romans 6:6 reads, “We are no longer slaves to sin.” 1 Peter 2:9 says, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” *The New Bible Dictionary* says, “It is the prayer which all Christians should regularly offer to God in order to be enabled to live as his children ever more completely until the day when his sovereignty is established.”²⁸ The words and music written by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson is the popular prayer for world peace, “Let There Be Peace on Earth” affirms that as children of God peace begins with each of us in our everyday lives. The words are, “God as our creator, children all are we. Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony. Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.”

²⁶ Wesley Study Bible, NRSV (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009), 1427-8.

²⁷ Matthew West, *Forgiveness, Overcoming the Impossible* (Nashville, TN: Countryman Publisher, 2013), 119-120.

²⁸ D. R. W. Wood & I. Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), accessed March 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver 6 v5 (IH).

The Companion to the United Methodist Hymnal records, “This song was first performed at the National Convention of Christians and Jews, Idylwyde Pines, CA.”²⁹

According to *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, healing and forgiveness were on the same basis in the Old Testament and the New Testament.³⁰ Psalm 103:2, 3 says, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits: who forgives all your sins, and heals all your diseases.” In the New Testament James 5:15 says, “The prayer of the faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. In his wisdom God showered his grace upon the world as a solution to the problem of broken family relationships involving child sexual abuse by sending God’s son, Jesus, with the gift of forgiveness of sins, enabling reconciliation and healing, justice and peace in relationships.

The Lord’s Prayer is embedded in the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29), beginning with the Beatitudes, where Jesus instructs his followers in doing righteousness. Jesus maintains that acts of piety, including prayer, are to be performed out of sincere worship for God rather than for mere show. As an example of how his disciples should pray, Jesus teaches the Lord’s Prayer, which is devoid of the “empty phrases” and “many words” that characterize the prayers of the “hypocrites”(Matt 6:5). The Lord’s Prayer is presented as a model that the disciples and all who follow Jesus are to approximate in formulating their prayers.³¹

²⁹ Carlton R. Young, *Companion to the United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993).

³⁰ G. P. Duffield and N. M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), accessed March 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

³¹ Powell, 250.

As a whole, the Lord's Prayer contains only one main idea, the deep longing after the kingdom of God, which forms the substance of all the prayers of the children of God. The last four petitions present a spiritual longing of the children of God in the light of the existing relation between humans and God. They are: Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, lead us not into temptation, deliver us from the evil one.³²

We are all God's children. According to Romans 8:14, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God." Adoption as God's children is received through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and based on faith in Jesus Christ.³³ Galatians 3:26 says, "for in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith." Christians share a union with God and one another.³⁴

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³² Lange, 172-3.

³³ Brand, 54.

³⁴ Wesley Study Bible, 1427-8.

³⁵ Powell, 250.

There is a parallel between the moral precepts, (the Beatitudes), in the Sermon on the Mount and the petitions in the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (Beatitude)

Matthew 6:12 Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Petition)

We must always bear in mind, that in the depth of His human sympathy, Christ felt more than any other the sins of humanity and that He entreated their forgiveness as that of a debt due by the whole family of humans.³⁶

In verse 12, petition 5 of the Lord's Prayer, "as we forgive" indicates the relation to our feelings of conciliation toward our neighbor, the assurance of our own forgiveness being connected with and regulated by our vow of readiness to forgive our neighbors. We feel assurance in God's forgiveness, perceiving within ourselves a readiness to forgive others, which God has implanted; and we pray for forgiveness while vowing, under a sense of this gracious experience.³⁷

A central feature of Jesus' ministry was his declaration that believers' sins were forgiven through their faith in him. Jesus has authority to forgive sins on account of his divinity, which is authenticated by his healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:5.³⁸

According to Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, forgiveness is ceasing to feel resentment for wrongs and offenses; also, forgiveness is pardon, involving restoration of broken relationships. Primarily, forgiveness is an act of God, releasing sinners from judgment and freeing them from the divine penalty of their sin. Since only God is holy, only God can forgive sin.

³⁶ Powell, 250.

³⁷ Lange, 172-3.

³⁸ Manser, 150.

Jesus displayed his authority to forgive sin in Mark 2:1-12, as exemplified in the story of Jesus healing the paralytic.³⁹ When Jesus saw the faith of the people who brought the paralyzed man to him, he said, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ The scribes accused him of blasphemy, saying only God could forgive sins. Jesus answered, “Which is easier to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk?’ ‘The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins – I say to you (the paralytic), stand up, take your mat, and go to your home.’ So the paralytic stood up, took his mat, and went out before all of them!”⁴⁰

The New Testament declares: Jesus has the authority during his lifetime to grant God’s forgiveness. According to Mark 2:5, healing can still be a sign of forgiveness granted, but on the whole the external confirmations of forgiveness important to the Old Testament diminish in the New Testament; it no longer needs them since Jesus himself is the confirmation of forgiveness.⁴¹ The Old Testament people believed only God had the authority to forgive, and the miracle of healing the paralytic proved Jesus was the Son of God so Jesus had the authority to forgive. Author, Max Lucado, states, “Where the grace of God is missed, bitterness is born. But where the grace of God is embraced, forgiveness flourishes!”⁴²

The Lord’s Prayer is unique, and unsurpassed – gathering in a few words all the essentials of true prayer. We can receive forgiveness through grace alone. But in order to pray to God for forgiveness in sincerity and without hypocrisy, we must be free from all spirit of hatred and revenge. Only when God has given us the grace truly to forgive

³⁹ W. A. Elwell and B. J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), accessed April 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

⁴⁰ *Wesley Study Bible, NRSV* (Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press, 2009).

⁴¹ E. Jenni and C. Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), accessed April 10, 2015, exported from Logos Bible Software 3 Silver v5 (IH).

⁴² Max Lucado, *In the Grip of Grace, He Will Love You Forever* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1997) 107.

those who sin against us can we utter a true prayer for forgiveness. This was looked upon by our Lord as of such importance that he reiterated it in Matthew 6:14-15.⁴³

In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 20th Century theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, talks about the difference between cheap grace and costly grace. He describes cheap grace as the grace, which amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin, departs. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin, which frees us from the toils of sin. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance. It's grace without discipline, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

On the other hand, costly grace is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Jesus. Costly grace is the gospel that must be sought again and again, the gift that must be asked for, and the door at which a person must knock. Costly grace calls us to follow Jesus Christ. Costly grace costs a person their life and it gives a person the only true life. Costly grace is costly because it condemns sin, and justifies the sinner. Costly grace is the sanctuary of God that has to be protected from the world, and not thrown to the dogs. Costly grace comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. A word of forgiveness can heal the family broken with sexual abuse. It is costly because it compels a person to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: "My yoke is easy and my burden light."⁴⁴

⁴³ D. R. W. Wood and I. H. Marshall,

⁴⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York, NY: Touchstone Rockefeller Center, 1959), 43-45.

Author, Adam Hamilton, writes about grace and forgiveness, “Christianity is a faith whose central focus is not guilt, but grace, redemption, healing, forgiveness, and mercy. But the process of forgiveness begins with our awareness and understanding of sin, for if we are not aware of our sin we go on living self-absorbed lives while hurting others. The purpose of learning about sin is to open the door to healing. Our God is a God of grace and mercy.”⁴⁵

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love; the Lord does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. (Psalm 103:8-10).

As it is expressed by Jesus in Matthew 6:14, when Jesus says, “If you forgive others your heavenly father will forgive you,” the ethics of forgiveness in the New Testament centers on the need to forgive others. However, in verse 15 Jesus says, “If you do not forgive others, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.” If in the midst of receiving forgiveness one does not forgive others, it is a clear sign that repentance is not complete. Colossians 3:13, “As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Jesus taught in parables because they are both interesting and compelling and one of the most effective means of communicating. Several times in the parables, the Lord insists that the readiness to forgive others is a sign of true repentance. Jesus taught that to forgive is a duty, and no limits can be set on it.

Forgiveness must be granted without reserve, repeatedly, even to “seventy times seven,” in Matthew 18:21-22. Forgiveness is part of the mutual relationship of believers,

⁴⁵ Adam Hamilton, *Forgiveness, Finding Peace Through Letting Go* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), 17-18.

and since all are dependent upon God's forgiveness, all are required to forgive one another.⁴⁶

Matthew 18:23-35 is a forgiveness parable of the "unmerciful servant," presenting a king who settles accounts. First, the king forgave his slave for a very large debt he owed, because it was more than he could repay. But then his slave refused to forgive a fellow slave the debt he owed to the slave. Consequently, the fellow slave was sent to prison. This made the king angry, so then he told his slave he would be tortured until he paid his debt he owed to the king in full. God's forgiveness is tied directly to forgiveness of others.

According to *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, the King could have sold his slave and the slave's family as a debt payment, but that would not have canceled the huge debt that was owed. The slave begged for mercy and time to repay the debt, but the King knew it was impossible. So the King decided to forgive the loss as a "bad loan." But, the slave had a "bad attitude" about what was owed to him by a fellow servant, even though it was a small amount compared to what he had been forgiven. When the servant owes the king ten thousand talents, the king forgives him; but, when the servant shows his unforgiving attitude toward a fellow servant, the king calls him wicked and turns him over to the torturers. The servant is to be tortured until he pays back all he owes, a debt that he never can repay. Jesus tells us in The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:12, 14-15, those forgiven must forgive, or they show themselves incapable of receiving forgiveness.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ W. A. Elwell and B. J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House).

⁴⁷ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 406-407.

In God we have redemption (salvation) through Jesus' blood, the remission (forgiveness) of our offenses in accordance with the riches and the generosity of God's gracious favor... (Eph. 1:7)

With the willingness to receive the love of God, to learn how to love oneself in a balanced way, and to love God back, and then let that love flow through to the world that is full of hurting people will “unbolt the doors” for forgiveness, just as Jesus forgave us, and then for reconciliation and healing to happen.⁴⁸ When we forgive others we receive the love of God. Then there will be hope for personal wholeness, and improved family relationships.

In conclusion, the study of the Old Testament scripture 2 Samuel 13:17 and the New Testament scripture Matthew 6:12-15 will equip pastors, leaders, and teachers with knowledge and resources available to understand and deal with the negative impacts that occur in families that have been affected by sexual abuse involving children in their family. Biblical Foundations include the study of the Old Testament Scripture 2 Samuel 13:17 involving the sexual abuse of King David's daughter by one of his sons, which leads to fear, anger, and bitterness for the other members of the royal family. Because the abuse is never confronted or dealt with, the negative affects of the abuse lead to murder committed by another brother. In the Old Testament God told the people who broke God's commandments to repent and change their ways so that they could be forgiven for their sins. But people continued to struggle with following the Law.

The New Testament scripture, Matthew 6:12-14, focuses on the New Covenant and the significance of forgiveness. Through the gift of grace God sent his Son, Jesus, to teach humans how to forgive, which is foundational to my anticipated Doctor of Ministry

⁴⁸ Joyce Meyer, *New Day New You*, (New York, NY: Faith Words Hachette Book Group, 2007), 158.

The analysis of the data collected will provide information to develop a curriculum for clergy and faith based leadership to minister to members of broken families who have been affected by sexual abuse involving minor children in their family and will bring an opportunity for forgiveness and healing to occur.

It is part of a parent's job to protect and teach one's children values, morals, and attitudes that will prevent the child from being harmed, and to trust and encourage the child to become what God intends the child to be when the child reaches adulthood. Unfortunately, there are many children who are abused physically, emotionally, or sexually and whose basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, medical care, or educational instruction are neglected.⁴⁹

We live in a society where families are broken by the negative affects of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involving children within the family is a generational issue that has existed since the Old Testament Bible times. Janet Pais, author of *Suffer the Children*, says there are children who suffer from sexual abuse in families today. There are young youth offenders who have been sexually abused by an adult or an older youth offender. Often, there is little understanding or compassion for the negative affects of sexual abuse involving family members.⁵⁰ Many family members are not aware of what to teach children in regards to the subject of sexual abuse to prepare them so they can make wise decisions and become informed, dependable, and responsible young adults. There are families who live in an environment of turmoil and fear involving abusive or addictive behavior. Secrets are hidden behind a wall of protection to keep from feeling the pain,

⁴⁹ Cynthia Crossman-Tower, *A Clergy Guide to Child Abuse and Neglect* (Cleveland, OH: The Press, 2006), 19.

⁵⁰ Janet Pais, *Suffer the Children, A Theology of Liberation by a Victim of Child Abuse* (Mahwey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991), 1.

shame, and guilt that leads to a breakdown in family relationships. “When the door is bolted, the sexual abuse remains a secret.”⁵¹ Jesus came to “unbolt the door,” “to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free...” (Luke 4:19).

Author, Len Hedges-Goettl, states that victims of abuse, or their families, are sometimes confronted with the mandate to forgive, but often it is the last thing they are able to do. I agree that forgiveness is a process, rather than a single act, and to repent means to turn from one thing and turn toward another. But then Hedges-Goettl says without repentance, there is little hope of forgiveness, and few abusers ever ask for forgiveness. We should offer psychological forgiveness even to unrepentant sexual abusers.⁵² In my research, more often I learn that in scripture forgiveness is described as the removal or letting go of debt (Matt. 6:12-14), and does not automatically grant trust and reconciliation.

We can learn to let go through attempts to extend grace and kindness toward the abuser, not hatred. We do this with a view toward their healing, recognizing God will judge their unrepentant abuse righteously.⁵³

In Genesis 37:24 when Jacob’s sons were jealous of Joseph, they threw him into the pit, and left him to die. Even though Joseph’s brothers may have meant the abuse for harm, God used it for good. God is not the source of evil. God is the source of the transforming power that confounds the evil and brings good instead. The process of

⁵¹ Joyce Meyer, 83.

⁵² Len Hedges-Goettl, 83, 84.

⁵³ Steven R. Tracy, “Sexual Abuse and Forgiveness” *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 27 no. 3, (Fall 1999), 219-229, accessed March 10, 2016.

healing is a long and slow one. Abuse affects how one thinks and processes information.⁵⁴

In the book of Genesis, Joseph experienced traumatic abuse. “So they approached Joseph saying: ‘Your father gave the instruction before he died, ‘Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.’ Now please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.’ Joseph wept when they spoke to him, and said ‘Do not be afraid. Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people.’ (Genesis 50:16-20).

The psalmist compared God to a father who “has compassion on all children” (Psalm 103:13), a teaching expanded by Jesus when Jesus declared that God is more caring than even human fathers (Luke 11:11-13). Jesus’ actions in welcoming the little children in Mark 10:13-16, exemplify the care which parents and teachers should use with children who are under their protection. Parents are charged not to provoke their children, in Ephesians 6:4, a command that forbids all forms of abuse and neglect. Ephesians 5:11 says that Christians have a responsibility to expose and work to rectify acts which are harmful to others, especially persons who are innocent and helpless.

Gordon Dalbey, author and international minister in Santa Barbara, California wrote, “This fallen world is affected by sin, brokenness, and evil all around. Jesus declared, ‘In this world you will have trouble all around.’ But Jesus never said do not pray with authority, in case it does not work. What he did say was pray with authority because it does work. His words were: ‘I have told you all of this so that you will have peace of heart and mind. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows; but cheer

⁵⁴ Len Hedges-Goettl, 85.

up, for I have overcome the world.’ (John 16:33). We press on after a deeper understanding of how Jesus is working to heal this broken world, with a readiness to join Jesus.⁵⁵ The “door has been unbolted.”

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:27).

⁵⁵ Gordon Dalbey, *Religion vs Reality: Facing the Home Front in Spiritual Warfare; Use Your Authority* (Jacksonville, FL: Healing Line, 2014) accessed April 10, 2015, <http://christianhealingmin.org>.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

The main issue in the history of the church that will be discussed is: The negative impact of the generational pattern of unresolved negative effects on the family as a result of continued sexual abuse that occurs within the family system. Church history reminds us that throughout the past generations problems, as well as mistakes, occurred long before anyone today can remember. Sometimes there are dysfunctional patterns of behavior in family systems that are continued, such as sexual abuse, that cause brokenness in the family.¹

We can learn from the events, such as the sexual abuse that occurred, and continued, throughout past generations. We can evaluate, and better determine how the similar problems of sexual abuse today can be handled so that history doesn't repeat itself and the negative effects on families will be reconciled and healed.

Historical issues of addictive sexual abusive individual and negative family behavior making an impact on the church (as a family system) from the early years of the church to current times will be shared. Topics will include: (1) beginning with Didache, a very early theological text of the Catholic Church which is dated around 70 A.D., children come up repeatedly, usually for their protection; (2) the development of John

¹ Gordon L. Heath, *Doing Church History*, (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Clements Publishing, 2008), 15.

Calvin's Geneva, a city of refuge in Switzerland, for families and their children persecuted (a form of abuse) during the Protestant Reformation; (3) John Wesley's "Holy Club" consisting of Oxford University students in England who prayed together and began social work with a ministry to help underprivileged urban families and a school for their children; (4) reports of the Roman Catholic Church that multiple priests were perpetrators in thousands of child sexual abuse cases, resulting in negative affects for the victims, their families, and their churches; (5) the occurrence of "han" a racial discrimination and injustice (a form of abuse) for Asian-American families, that affects the lives of many people in our society, and (6) the testimony of the writer as the Pastor of an urban church. The common thread of brokenness woven through history happens in families affected by abuse involving their minor children will be discussed, that is, emotionally, relationally, socially, spiritually.

The Early Years of the Church: 70 A.D. through 1049

Children come up repeatedly in the Didache, usually for their protection. Actions against children that are banned in the document include their abortion in the womb, their murder after birth, their use in fornication, and their employment in rape and pederasty...By the Council (or Synod) of Elvira in 309, the problem of child abuse had become large enough for special punishments to be put in place, such as: those who sexually abuse boys may not commune, even when death approaches. Note that there was no secular reporting or punishment required. The issue was seen in spiritual terms. In the year 1049, Saint Peter Damian wrote the "Book of Gomorrah" in which he railed

against the Priesthood, specifically condemning sodomy against both children and young priests.²

The Protestant Reformation, 1520-1618

During the Protestant Reformation people challenged the teachings and the practices of the Roman Catholic Church, causing separation and brokenness in the church. The priests, popes, and bishops of the church were more interested in money and power than in leading a simple life of poverty. Martin Luther, a German priest, criticized the role of the church, especially for “indulgences” - the forgiveness of sins in exchange for money and was excommunicated in 1521.³ Several other groups did the same and they were called Protestants. In 1523 Ulrich Zwingli led the Reformation in Switzerland, which caused a civil war and he was killed. John Calvin had followers in France, Germany, and Holland. Calvin arrived in Geneva, Switzerland in 1536 and created a well run state and superbly run church.⁴ Today Geneva is a respectable, prosperous Swiss, neutral city located at the end of Lake Geneva where the Rhine River begins its rush to the sea.⁵ Food and shelter were provided in Geneva for refugee families who were victims of the historical events of the church. Their spiritual lives were broken and they searched for a place where they could live without the fear of abuse from the Roman

² Alex Wilhelm, “The Long Scandal: A History of Abuse” *The Huntington Post*, May 25, 2011, accessed March 10, 2013, <http://huntingtonpost.com>.

³ Miranda Smith, *The Kingfisher History Encyclopedia* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 214.

⁴ E. William Monter, *Calvin's Geneva* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Inc. 1967), vii.

⁵ William G. Naphy, *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25.

Catholic areas, according to the “reform of the Word.” Protestants emphasized charity as a response of love to God and one’s neighbor.⁶ In welcoming people to Geneva, it was possible for the city to accommodate those refugees and make Geneva a city of refuge. It survived because of a conviction that people who came for religious reasons should be helped and their brokenness could be healed. Calvin preached charity but generously supported the poor as well. It was Calvin’s vision of the duties of Christians toward the less fortunate.⁷

One of the ways to have success in healing the brokenness for the victims and their families, who were being persecuted and left the Catholic Church, was the development of Calvin’s religious program in Geneva that depended on the company of reformed ministers who worked alongside him with daily responsibilities for preaching the Word, performing the sacraments, and providing pastoral care in Geneva’s three city churches and a dozen countryside parishes. Calvin organized the group known as the Company of Pastors that met each Friday morning to examine candidates for ministry and discuss the theological and practical business of the church.⁸ Calvin began his work in Geneva as one of the ministers, and he used his gift for organization by drawing up a catechism and a confession of faith, which were accepted by the city government.

There were many struggles, trials and troubles in Calvin’s Geneva experience. In Calvin’s day the poor city of Geneva was smaller, less secure, and isolated. It faced the threat of armed assault, was over-crowded and stuffed with refugees, the people who fled

⁶ Jennine E. Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare* (Cranbury, NJ: Assoc. University Press, 1989), 11.

⁷ Olson, 18, 24, 29.

⁸ Scott Manetsch, *Calvin’s Company of Pastors Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in Time of Calvin* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), Intro.

from the abuse situations of the reformation. Geneva was a prosperous market town for most of the 15th century because its location made it a major transit point for a trade route between Italy and the Low Countries. At the end of the 15th century the French established rival fairs in Lyon, which caused Geneva to sink into economic decline. It remained an important crossroad for trade, but it was no longer a center for banking. To the east of the city the armies of Berne were on the move. To the west, France was moving to secure the passes of the Alps to the plains of Italy. In the middle was duchy of Savoy. The Savoyard dukes moved the capital to Geneva because it was an imperial free city under a prince-bishop. The dukes' representative, called the "vidomme," played a key role in the area of criminal justice. The prince-bishop and cathedral canons had political and economic power. The people had an elected senate whose job it was to protect the rights and privileges of the late 14th century Franchises. This created a triangular political arrangement with the city governed by the senate. As the city began to experience economic decline, tensions began to appear. In 1519, local business-politicians called on the Swiss to help the city become independent. In the late 1520's Geneva's revolt against the Savoy flared up. Politics split up into three groups: the smallest supported the duke, the slightly larger favored the bishop, and the largest wanted independence and membership in the Swiss Confederation, which involved religion into the equation. Protestantism, adopted by Berne, would need to be accepted by the citizens of Geneva in order to have Bernese military support. As a result of the revolt, Geneva became politically independent but occupied by Berne. The city was saved by the threat

of French intervention, so Berne withdrew and the city unanimously approved Protestantism.⁹

Calvin entered Geneva in 1536, along with Guillaume Farel, the city's chief reformer, and was caught in the crossfire of another fight. This time, the debate was over the best way to guarantee continued Bernese support. The city was dependent on Berne in a dangerous situation. By 1538 Geneva's rulers were forced to decide how to maintain the alliance with Berne. Calvin became a victim of this foreign policy. Calvin and Farel denied that the state had competence in religious affairs with regard to the ministers. The senate was unwilling to be lectured on a foreign policy decision and the ministers were not united on the matter.¹⁰ The matter involved the right of the church to decide who was worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper and who would be excluded. The issue was whether the church should be ruled by the councils or by the ministers. When Sunday came for the communion service, Calvin refused to administer the sacrament at all, on the grounds that the people were not in the proper mood. He had been warned to stay out of politics so it was a mixture of political and religious factors that led to his dismissal. Calvin left Geneva and was invited to Strasbourg where he spent the next three years in work that was much more congenial to his tastes. He preached and directed the French church, besides teaching theology. He revised the order of worship, introduced congregational singing and extemporaneous prayer, as well as a great deal of writing.

In Geneva struggles continued, aggravated by deteriorating relations with neighboring states and the threat of war. There was mob violence and public morals were

⁹ Wm G. Naphy, *The Cambridge Companion To John Calvin* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2004), 25-26.

¹⁰ Naphy, 27-28.

low. Calvin was invited to return, and even though he was not happy with the thought of going back, he became convinced it was the will of God. He returned in 1541 where he was to live the rest of his life, and was given the opportunity to put his ideas into effect in the ordering of the religious life of the city, however, his ecclesiastical ordinances were subjected to revision by the councils before being adopted by the general assembly; nevertheless, they represent his ideas on polity and discipline.¹¹ It was during the period 1541-46 Calvin collected the ministers into a Company of Pastors group and worked in an effective and efficient consistory. They met every week and became the local governing body of the church. In 1559 they succeeded in establishing a forum for higher education, the Academy.¹²

The children of Geneva played an important part in Calvin's well-developed religious education program. They were drilled on their catechism every Sunday at noon until they could repeat from memory the essentials of their faith. In general the parents embraced Calvin's doctrine lessons without objection as the children learned and experienced a sense of family connection within the church. The material was a lengthy document that filled 67 folios in its first printed edition of 1545. Calvin's Geneva was in theory governed by God bringing a balance of spiritual and secular powers through clergy and laity acting in harmony.¹³

Even though our contemporary times have changed, it is through the success

¹¹ William Gilbert, *Renaissance and Reformation: Calvin and Geneva, England and Scotland in the 16th Century, France, 1494-1459, Chapter 14*, accessed March 10, 2013, <http://carrie-full-text-electroniclibrary>.

¹² Naphy, 30.

¹³ Monte 100, 101, 144, 165.

story of the 16th century Geneva that we can realize that the church of today can become a refuge and offer adaptable ministry that can have an impact on the lives of the children of the urban ministry. It is important to remember that many of the non-French refugees (especially the English and Scots) arrived in Geneva after the worst of the 1555 crisis. They saw a Geneva purged of opposition, full of zealous refugees. It was a place of enthusiasm, learning devotion, and determination.¹⁴

The Methodists in the 18th Century

In the 18th century John Wesley led a group of Oxford Methodists in England. The group was called the “Holy Club,” and began with three theological students, including John’s younger brother, Charles, “for the study of the classics and of the New Testament for the cultivation of piety.” The group was involved in social work in the city focusing on two city prisons and poor families, in the workhouse and in a school for underprivileged children. For years some 20 children from poor families were given an education they would otherwise have been denied. The society’s motives were to imitate Jesus and fulfill his commandments, and to strive for blessedness through commitment to the higher goal of the salvation of souls.¹⁵

John Wesley took measures to relieve the poor, which were prompted by his own perception of the misery he encountered in his travels and visits to families, factories, workhouses, hospitals, and prisons. Wesley emphasized personal contact with those

¹⁴ Naphy, 35.

¹⁵ Manfred Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics, Praxis and Principles* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 23-25.

people who needed help. He demanded that those active in the social work of his fellowship must bring help to the poor in order to witness the gravity of the situation. Wesley did not regard the alleged laziness of many poor people as the major cause of their state. From his experience and observations during his time with the Oxford Holy Club, he understood the prejudices for what they were. He felt that social reform was urgently needed.¹⁶ As it was stated according to Wesley, “True Christianity consists not in a formal, lifeless religion,” such as he observed in his time, but in “the love of God and of all humankind.” This “two-fold commandment of love” was for Wesley, as for few other Christian theologians the initial basis for and the cardinal point of ethics, and for the whole Christian life: “Loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good that we have received and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and loving every soul which God made, every person on earth as our own soul.”¹⁷

Wesley preached God’s love for all humankind and demanded unrestricted love for one’s neighbor with a sense of responsibility. The rules for dealing with others whether recipients of aid within or outside the community were based on the fundamentally equal worth of all persons. He justified this in two ways: in negative terms by human nature’s total depravity, or in positive terms by God’s universal love for God’s children. Sympathy and courtesy are owed even to the poor and the outcast who would be loved for the sake of their Creator. Every person is valued equally with others.¹⁸ According to Wesley’s conviction, all children are to be regarded as creatures of God who are destined for blessedness. For Wesley, the love of humankind, a means to

¹⁶ Marquardt, 30.

¹⁷ Marquardt, 32.

¹⁸ Marquardt, 33.

make provision for the working of God's grace in all children and adults, was the driving force for all his activity. Since Wesley saw a vital connection with God as the only way to attain this goal, he directed all his efforts to bring all children and adults to the point where this connection could develop. He sought to bring to the children the greatness of God and God's love. Wesley treated the children under his care like small adults.¹⁹

Wesley's ethic regarding love for others, born from experiencing God's unlimited love, creates the preconditions of social involvement: social sensitivity solidarity in community and compassion for others. He believed love awakens the conscience to unlimited responsibility for others, regardless of their religious, moral, or social character. Love gives the practical power to transcend the boundaries of race, nationality, and social stratification, and to recognize all persons as recipients of loving gifts.²⁰

Reflecting on the history of the 18th century, we consider Wesley's ethic, which began with the universal love of God that repudiates any religious heightening of social abuses, and with the rational analysis of situations that provided the necessary motivation and concrete suggestions leading to practical consequences, we can see it as influential and helpful beyond Wesley's own time. Wesley prompted others to recognize social problems as early as possible and to investigate the way to their underlying causes, while he made it clear that analysis are drawn from them.²¹ The challenge for the church of today is to reach out and continue this ethic and offer ministry to all God's children in our urban communities.

¹⁹ Marquardt, 63.

²⁰ Marquardt, 136.

²¹ Marquardt, 137.

The Catholic Church Priests' Sexual Abuse of Children

In 2002 reports of sexual abuse of children by Catholic Church priests became public, beginning with the case of John Geoghan, a priest in the Boston Archdiocese. He was accused of sexually abusing more than 130 children over 3 decades. Catholic Church officials covered up Geoghan's actions during these years.

The US Conf. of Catholic Bishops developed and signed the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in order to better understand the problem of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests. The charter was divided into two groups: the Nature and Scope study (from 1950 thru 2002), and the Causes and Context of the problem study (from historical, sociological, psychological, and situational perspectives).²² The crisis emerged in 2002, but most abuse cases being reported had occurred decades earlier. The data collected by the Nature and Scope study showed 93% of incidents of child sexual abuse by priests reported between 1950 and 2009 took place before 1990, and concentrated between 1965 and 1985. The data by the end of 2003 showed 4,392 priests (4% of priests in ministry in that time period) had allegations of abuse between 1950 and 2002, and 10,667 individuals made allegations of child sexual abuse against priests known to dioceses during that time period.²³

The primary focus of the Causes and Context study was to determine what caused the rise in abuse cases in the 1960s and decline in the 1980s. Data showed that few priests were driven to commit acts of sexual abuse against minors because of serious

²² Thomas Plante and Kathleen L. McChesney, *Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: A Decade of Crisis, 2002-2012* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 17.

²³ Plante, 18-20.

psychological disorders. Most priests had allegations against minors who were pubescent or post-pubescent, and many violated their vows of celibacy with adults. A combination of factors included: motivation to abuse (emotionally congruent to minor, as well as blockage to intimate relationships with adults); overcoming internal inhibitions to abuse (excuses that alleviate sense of responsibility); overcoming external factors (creating opportunities for abuse); overcoming the child's resistance (grooming techniques). Many priest-abusers created opportunities to be alone with minors, and integrated themselves into the families of victims. Most victims did not disclose their victimization for years. The reliance on "insiders" and insistence on private agreements with victims led to frustration with the lack of transparency by many Catholics and advocates for victims.²⁴

The Causes and Context study evaluated changes in cultural, social, and psychological factors in American society and the Catholic Church that may have contributed to the likelihood of sexual abuse of minors, particularly during the 1970s. Those were peak years for other types of deviant behavior, including divorce, drug use, and criminal behavior in society. Significant changes in preparation for priesthood were incorporated in many seminaries. In the earlier decades, education for the Catholic priesthood was more likely to begin during high school or college. Since the 1980s a pre-theology program of one or two years supplanted the longer period of studies. Ordination to ministry almost always followed four years of postgraduate preparation in a theological seminary, called "the program of priestly formation." Theological seminaries made considerable changes in the models and content in the area of human formation, consistent with the late-twentieth-century emphasis on the importance and value of the

²⁴ Plante, 20-24.

individual person. Beginning about 2005 seminaries adopted the four-fold model of formation identified by Pope John XXIII in 1992, where he proposed the necessity of including these four dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.²⁵

From 2006 to 2010 immense changes were recorded demonstrating greater awareness of the need for human formation, including education about the role of sexuality and celibacy in the life of a priest. There was a shift in vocabulary with the new approaches to formation. The seminaries discussed the integration of the four aspects (“pillars”): human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral to be interrelated. Human is the foundation for all the others; spiritual enhances the capacity to develop a relationship with God and others; intellectual provides understanding of all areas; and pastoral is expressions in ministry of the other dimensions. In preparation for priesthood, the role of human foundation is to emphasize developing positive relationships, and the personal responsibility each seminarian must take to develop a moral conscience, an order of the passions, and maintaining boundaries in order to achieve good and avoid evil.²⁶

The role that priestly formation played in the sexual abuse crisis is crucial. The priests with the most allegations of abuse were those who were educated in seminary prior to the peak years of the abuse crisis (the 1970s). There was little training in human formation to resist the influences of the social culture of the times, and little was understood about the extent of the harm caused by the sexual victimization of youths. These facts along with the oversight of individual priests in positions of power in parishes

²⁵ Plante, 25.

²⁶ Plante, 28-29.

allowed the crisis to escalate as it did. The sexual abuse crisis is an historical problem, and it is critical that we understand the causes so as to prevent another in the future.²⁷

St. Augustine of Hippo said, “Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.”²⁸ The sexual abuse of children in the history of the church was overwhelming. The door needed to be unlocked, so that the anger could be released and dealt with.

According to Alex Wilhelm, author of an article published in 2010 and updated in 2011, “There has been much suffering and pain at the hands of the Catholic Church against the most innocent and defenseless in human society, children. Wilhelm says in the last 50 years some 30,000 people in 25 countries have reported abuse committed by the Church’s many workers.”²⁹

Racial Injustice Caused by Han

Dr. Andrew Sung Park, author of *Racial Conflict and Healing*, presents his approach to the problem of “han” (a Korean term describing the ineffable pain of unjustly oppressed). He says racial discrimination and injustice for Asian Americans in the United States, is a situation that affects the lives of many people. Regarding the pressing issue of racial justice, Dr. Park says that the primary task of the church in the U.S. is to elicit racial justice and healing and in order that true reconciliation can take place only when an oppressed group initiates it; only the oppressed can generate a racially

²⁷ Plante, 29-30.

²⁸ Plante, 31.

²⁹ Wilhelm,

harmonious society. Our society is a racially wounded society. A deep han of this society is its individualistic ideology, which underlies corporate America, its media, culture, and Christianity.³⁰ A recent example of racial conflict in the urban city and its negative affects on society is the event which occurred in Ferguson, Mo., involving the shooting and death of an African-American by a Caucasian police officer. I believe that these social conditions are common to people of all ethnic groups, regardless of race, gender, or religion. The problems should bring people together, not divide and segregate individuals. People react in various ways when they are afraid or intimidated; they may withdraw, put up walls around themselves, or become defensive and destructive.

Dr. Park states that the process of transformation first requires people to seek to understand each other so that han begins to melt, and people support each other. Dr. Park refers to the theologian, Augustine, who described two cities, the earthly city built on love of self and the city of God founded on the love of God. He says all earthly kingdoms and cities based on human goals will fade away, such as Babylon and Rome did, but the city of God constructed on God's will and the movement of God's Spirit will remain standing.³¹

Outcome of Han in Divided Korea

Dr. Park tells when Germany lost World War II in 1945, it was divided because of its potential threat to future world peace. When Japan lost the war in 1945, Korea was divided, with its south occupied by the U.S. and its north by the Soviet Union. On

³⁰ Andrew Sung Park, *Racial Conflict and Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1996), ix, x, 3.

³¹ Park, 4.

August 14, 1945, the U.S. received the unconditional surrender of Japan. Just before the war ended, on August 10-11, 1945, the decision to divide Korea was made. Korea, a non-threatening country, was divided against its will after thirty-six years of oppression by Japan. Korea became a historical sacrificial lamb in place of Japan that had ruthlessly oppressed it for thirty-six years. The division caused the Korean War, an outcome of the Cold War between the communist and capitalist camps. It cost millions of lives and the devastation of a barely liberated country. The division is the main cause of han in Korea. A large number of Korean women married to U.S. soldiers, their families, some students, and many refugees from North Korea have immigrated to the U.S.³²

Dr. Park says that sometimes people transfer their han to others by inflicting the same pain upon them they have been victims of. The economic independence of husband and wife has brought conflict of authority over the family that leads to family breakdown. Women suffer from the sexism of society, and are humiliated or harassed by superiors in various ways. Korean immigrants work hard and become successful entrepreneurs, but if they thrive at the expense of others with long hours of labor and an inadequate compensation package by endangering their own health, and by neglecting their own children's wellbeing, they fail in achieving their "American dream." Dr. Park says, this type of success is an act of idolatry, of worshiping business success. This reality of han and sin is interwoven in the structure of Korean-American existence.³³

³² Park, 12-14.

³³ Park, 12-14.

Urban Church in Current Times

As the pastor of an urban city church for seven years, the behavior of many young children who played, unsupervised, on the surrounding streets was observed. Most of the children were in elementary grades kindergarten through fifth. Some of the children were “hanging out” in the community garden located on an empty lot between two churches (this church and a church of another denomination). While strolling through the garden one day, it was apparent the children were eating some of the vegetables that were growing in the raised plots. The children were invited into the church for a free Sunday morning breakfast before the worship service. They were happy to have a meal and to be included in the service and Sunday school activities. Two qualified teachers and two members (one male and one female) volunteered to teach and supervise the children each Sunday. When the children started coming we noticed their social skills were very inappropriate; they were disorderly and would often fight, or get into things that were off limits. Based on the way they looked and acted, it appeared they were poor and without any guidance. “The lives of the children who reside in urban neighborhoods are shaped by the degree of ministry the urban church can provide for them. Without the church ministry, the future is bleak for many of these children especially for those who are oppressed and live in families where poverty, neglect or abusive situations exist and there is no way to leave, change or improve their living conditions. The power figures of the city hold tight control over poor neighborhoods, the schools teach a mainstream lifestyle, and the welfare system keeps a tight reign on the lifestyle of the recipients.”³⁴

³⁴ David Claerbaut, *Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 70.

“Historically, the people who live in the urban neighborhoods of the city have been affected by many factors in the community they are located. Some of those factors include the economy, environment, sustainability of faith, morals, and values, responsibility of being a parent, and searching for healing of brokenness. The urban church can be defined as a community, usually organized formally, of God’s people in the city.”³⁵

In the urban neighborhood in which the church was located, it was not unusual to see young children left alone for long periods of time without adult supervision. In the public school system teachers come and go, administrators are shuffled, and no one is accountable or in charge of the care and safety of the children. Often no one is advocating for the quality of education to be provided for most of these urban church children. “Without an adult role model, many children are vulnerable and at high risk to being exposed to an environment involving negative behavior such as the misuse of alcohol, drugs, or sexual abuse, bullying, violence, stealing, gangs or human trafficking.”³⁶ This environment can have a negative effect on the members of the families of the minor children who are involved.

Conclusion

A discussion of the overall assessment of the historical research, including what has been learned, and how to use the information to minister to members of families who

³⁵ Claerbaut, 13.

³⁶ Claerbaut, 80.

are negatively affected by their minor children within their family who are involved in sexual abuse or any other negative behavior.

The most significant factor is that sexual abuse involving minor children is generational and has been occurring for centuries. An issue of major impact is that the method the early church dealt with clergy who had abused children was passive and secretive while the safety of children was not a priority. “It was not only the priests who were guilty of sexually abusing children but the bishops and cardinals who failed to report the pedophiles. The investigative staff of the Boston Globe commented: We cannot escape the effects of the betrayals that were committed against us in God’s name. They are woven into the texture of who we have become.”³⁷

Fortunately, the uncovering of the depth of the scandal of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church has opened the door to allow the secrets to be released and the pain of injustice to be lifted from the families of innocent children who were sexually abused and were affected in a negative way.

From the studies found in the Historical Foundation research of (1) sexual abuse of children in the early Catholic Church as well as the church through the years, (2) the children of persecuted families of John Calvin’s Geneva, (3) the neglected children of poor families in John Wesley’s ministry, (4) the children of families suffering with the injustice of “han”, and (5) the abused or neglected children of poor families in the urban church of today, this information will be gleaned, enhanced, and broadened for the ministry project study.

³⁷Investigative Staff of the Boston Globe, *Betrayal: Crisis in the Catholic Church* (Boston, MA: Little Brown and Company, 2002), 7, 9.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

We live in a broken world where people do not realize that they need God, and they do not know how to turn to God to solve their problems. Members of families struggle with brokenness caused by negative effects emotionally, socially, or spiritually by the occurrence of sexual abuse involving minor children. The four basic types of child abuse are physical, emotional, and sexual or neglect. Often, children are exposed to sexually abusive or addictive behavior of other children or adults they know and trust. Not understanding what is appropriate behavior or other options available, the children, as well as other members of the family live in an environment of mistrust, fear and confusion. Faith Trust Institute of Seattle, WA is a national, multi-faith, multi-cultural training and education organization with global reach working to end sexual and domestic violence, founded in 1977. According to information available through Faith Trust Institute of Seattle, WA, a situation of sexual abuse can involve contact between a significantly older, more powerful juvenile and another younger child. Younger children are not developmentally capable of understanding or resisting sexual contact and may be psychologically and socially dependent upon a juvenile offender who is older. In addition to sexual contact, sexual abuse can include other exploitive behaviors such as inappropriate verbal stimulation of a child, taking or showing sexually explicit

photographs of or to a child, or exposing a child to pornography or adult sexual activity.¹

God's Word comes as a healing and empowering presence among historical tendencies moving toward fragmentation and alienation. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are all called "to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together."²

We are all confronted with a perplexing and changing world. Education in faith is rooted in a community of memory where stories, beliefs, and practices must be taught. Education is connected to our personal journeys of grace and pain where we want to live with hope and vitality as we join with others in the healing of a broken creation. We seek God's will in the midst of pain and struggle in our lives, our failures, betrayals, gifts, and love in a chaotic world whose anguish and hatred seem so intractable.³

The patterns of family life shape the ways we think about ourselves. Faith based support groups can offer opportunity for people whose lives have been negatively affected by sexual abuse to share the happenings of their lives, to reinforce new meanings, and to support others on their journeys. Theological reflection occurs as we encounter God's Word in our lives. The Church is a "safe harbor" for people to open the depth of their lives and receive an opportunity to participate in God's grace, love, and hope for a better future. We continue the work of Jesus toward meaning, wholeness and justice.⁴

¹ Faith Trust Institute, *What you need to know if a child is being abused* (Seattle, WA: 2012) accessed March 10, 2016, <http://faithtrustinstitute.org>.

² Jack Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 110.

³ Seymour, 111.

⁴ Seymour, 123-128.

Anthropology is the theological study of the nature of humanity, sin, and grace. This theology includes understanding of three parts: first, that humanity was created in the image and likeness of God, which means humans were created innocent and holy; second, the concept of sin as being a decision to turn away from God to the material world, that means a broken relationship between humans and God; and third, the nature and doctrine of grace freely given by God to every human being, that means humans are forgiven.

So, God created humankind in God's own image, in the image of God humans were created (Genesis 1:27). According to some Christian theologians this scripture is interpreted as a link between the creator and humanity. Another interpretation of the "image of God" is the wisdom of God. Augustine of Hippo argued that the creator made humanity superior to the animal kingdom. The central element of human nature is a mind with intelligence with the ability to relate to and partake in the life of God.⁵ Based on this belief, patristic writers emphasized that humans were created and enjoyed a state of blessedness in the Garden of Eden that no other creature was capable of.

The United Methodist doctrine regarding humanity created in the "image of God" is that humans share God's nature and divine capacities including understanding, freedom of the will, and affections.⁶ Humans are capable of using their brain to learn, to make decisions, and to feel.

An Introduction to Theology describes the doctrine of humanity as the "base point" of Christian faith because Christian faith focuses on the human person, Jesus, who is the

⁵ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction, 5th Edition* (London, England: Wiley & Sons, 2011), 348-9.

⁶ Scott Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine: The Extreme Center*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 146-7.

Christ. It goes on to say “the doctrine of God is fulfilled in Jesus, who is the ‘image of the invisible God’ Colossians 1:15. Humans receive the revelation of God with the understanding of themselves first, as creatures created ‘in the image of God’, second, as sinners, and third, as redeemed by God’s grace”.⁷ This doctrine embraces the concept of the need for a ministry to serve adult family members who are dealing with blame, shame, guilt, resentment, bitterness, or anger toward one another as a result of generational sexual abuse involving a minor child who is part of the family, and who are unwilling to discuss forgiveness and healing through God’s grace. It is through forgiveness and God’s grace the image of God is restored.

The first and most fundamental thing that the Bible says about human beings is that we are creatures, part of God’s creation, and dependent on God for our being and continued existence. Humans are totally creature and are essentially good because humanity results from the purpose and loving will of the creator. The concept of the “image of God” plays a larger part in the New Testament, because it is affirmed that Jesus Christ is the “image of God”, and that Jesus is true humanity as it was created to be.⁸ The role and work of Jesus Christ is significant in the theology of Anthropology. One aspect of the human uniqueness of being in the “image of God” is human freedom, the capacity to choose between obedience and disobedience, good and evil.

See, it is set before you today, life and prosperity, death and adversity.

Deuteronomy 30:15.

⁷ Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology: Third Edition* (New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 133.

⁸ Thomas, 136.

It is human responsibility to choose life and God's prosperity, to be good stewards. Good stewards of everything God has created. We are all God's children and we all are created in the "image of God." Humans are called to respond in perfect trust and obedience to the love of God.⁹ When sexual abuse involving minor children occurs, there is a breakdown of trust and obedience to the love of God. All the people in the family suffer from the negative effects of the breakdown of trust in the love of God.

John Wesley indicates that the most important way in which creation in the image of God should be understood concerns the moral image. For him, it is clear from 1 John 4:8 that "God is Love." To be created in the moral image of God is to be created "full of love, which was the sole principle of all tempers, thoughts, words, and actions." Justice, mercy, and truth characterize this image as well. This understanding of creation in the moral image of God and is the foundation to the rest of the United Methodist doctrine.¹⁰

When the creator of the universe wanted to create something "in God's image," something more like God, more than all the rest of creation, God made us. We are the culmination of God's infinitely wise and skillful work of creation. Every single human being, no matter how much the image of God is marred by sin, or illness, or weakness, or age, or any other disability, still has the status of being in God's image and must be treated with the dignity and respect that is due to God's image-bearer. It means that all people and all children deserve full protection and honor as human beings.¹¹

⁹ Thomas, 138-9.

¹⁰ Jones, 148.

¹¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 449-450.

The heart of United Methodist doctrine is saving grace, which is the starting point of its anthropology. God's creation of humankind was an act of grace. God's grace is an expression of God's essential nature, which is love.¹²

The concept of sin as a broken relationship between God and humanity is the second part of Anthropology. Author Wayne Grudem explains sin and its scriptural basis as primarily a history of people in a state of sin and rebellion against God and of God's plan of redemption to bring people back to God. The definition of sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature, which includes not only individual acts such as stealing or lying or committing murder, but also attitudes that are contrary to the attitudes God requires of us, such as abuse. We realize that sin is harmful to our lives, and it brings pain and destructive consequences to us and to others affected by it. Sin is directly opposite to all that is good in the character of God, and God eternally hates sin. It is the contradiction of the excellence of God's moral character and contradicts God's holiness.¹³

The fact that Adam was created "in the image" of God meant that he was free from all normal weaknesses and disabilities that afflicted human nature. There was no need for Adam and Eve to fall from this state of grace. It happened because of the decision to turn away from God to the material world. As a result, the image of God in human nature has been disfigured, and all humanity shares in this defacement.¹⁴

Augustine of Hippo summarized the basic ideas of freedom of the will: 1. Human beings do not do things as a matter of necessity, but as a matter of freedom; and,

¹² Jones, 145-146.

¹³ Grudem, 490-492.

¹⁴ McGrath, 350.

Human free will has been weakened and incapacitated through sin. In order to be restored and healed, it requires the operation of divine grace. Augustine goes on to explain that humanity is universally affected by sin as a consequence of the fall. Sin makes it impossible for the sinner to think clearly, and to understand higher spiritual truths and ideas. Sinners are to be considered as seriously ill and unable to diagnose their own illness, let alone cure it. It is through the grace of God alone that humanity's illness is diagnosed, sin, and a cure made available, grace.¹⁵

Augustine believed that humanity has no control over sinfulness. Humanity is born with an innately sinful disposition and an inherent bias toward sinning. Sin causes sin. This explains the fact that sexual abuse is generational, and it is inherited. It has become a pattern of behavior in many families, and it continues to cause brokenness. Augustine uses three analogies that are applied to sin: disease, power, and guilt. The sin of sexual abuse is a disease and is passed down from one generation to another. It cannot be cured by human agency. However, Christ is the divine physician by “whose wounds we are healed”...Isaiah 53:5. Humanity is healed by the grace of God so that the mind may recognize God and the will may freely respond to the divine offer of grace. Augustine treats sin as a form of hereditary disease, which is passed down from one generation to another. It cannot be cured by humans, only Christ as the divine physician, by “whose wounds we are healed” Isaiah 53:5; Sin is a power that holds humanity captive and from whose grip is unable to break free by its own resources. Christ is seen as the liberator of humanity, the source of grace that breaks the power of sin; Sin is essentially judicial – guilt that is passed down from one generation to another. Christ

¹⁵ McGrath, 352.

comes to bring forgiveness and pardon¹⁶ to the sinner, who in the case of sexual abuse is the sexual offender.

In the book, *An Introduction to Theology*, the definition of the doctrine of sin is given as any failure to be worthy children of God – a failure to be perfect in love as God is. Jesus does not speculate on the origin and nature of sin but simply indicates, of his teaching and parables, its actuality. In Mark 7:21 he underlines the idea that sin is a matter of the heart, of the inner attitude and intention.

For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, wickedness, deceit, envy, slander, and pride. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. (Mark 7:21-23)

But his message is that sin and its results are overcome by the presence of the kingdom.¹⁷ Paul said, “Sin is man’s wanting to dispose of his existence, to raise claims for himself, to be like God. The comprehensive term for the results of sin is death – spiritual death (Romans 6:23). ”The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Dr. Andrew Park states: Sin is a thought, word, deed, attitude, or intention that goes against God and humanity. It is a damaged relationship that sets us apart from God’s creation. It makes people isolated and withdrawn. The tragic history of the world starts with the broken relationship of Adam and Eve with God. The fact that the serpent

¹⁶ McGrath, 352.

¹⁷ Thomas, 144, 145.

deceived Adam and Eve points to our imperfection. The story of the fall starts with the story of God's creation of us, imperfect and free, resulting in human sin.¹⁸

The anthropology of United Methodist Doctrine begins with creation in the image of God, but it never rests there. The image that was God's intention has been disfigured by sin. As sinful creatures we have broken the covenant, become estranged from God, we have wounded one another, and ourselves and wreaked havoc throughout the natural order. The nature of the human problem is such that humanity cannot fix its own problem, the grace of God is the way in which genuine salvation comes. John Wesley says the result of the fall is that human beings have a corrupted nature.¹⁹

The heart of the United Methodist doctrine is saving grace. God's grace is an expression of God's essential nature, which is love. Human beings are created in God's image, yet original sin has so corrupted that image that no person can be saved on his or her own. Original sin leads to actual sins. No person is ever left alone, because God's grace is freely given to all. The picture of fallen humanity looks bleak. It is crucial to understand that the portrait of the natural human being is incomplete without also acknowledging the universal, saving grace of God, which has been given to every human being.

Wesley defines grace as being rooted in God's nature as love. It is favor given despite sin. It is a gift. Its effects know it. It restores the knowledge of right and wrong, convinces of sin, forgives and gives power over sin, thereby healing the disease. Since grace is God's love, it ought to be understood in relational terms. Just as other

¹⁸ Andrew Park, *From Hurt to Healing: Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 28.

¹⁹ Scott Jones, 149-151.

relationships have different stages of development, so does the human being's relationship with God. Grace is all one but it will do different things depending on what the human being needs at particular points.²⁰

One of Augustine's favorite biblical texts was John 15:5, "apart from me you can do nothing." In Augustine's view, humanity is totally dependent upon God for salvation. Augustine holds that human nature is frail, weak, and lost, and needs divine assistance and care if it is to be restored and renewed. Grace is God's generous and unmerited attention to humanity, forgiveness by which this process of healing may begin. For Augustine humanity is justified as an act of grace: even human good works are the result of God working within fallen human nature. Everything leading up to salvation is the free and unmerited gift of God, given out of love for sinners. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ humanity is forgiven and God gives humanity what it does not deserve, which is salvation, and withholds from it what it does deserve, which is condemnation.²¹

God gives undeserved blessings, grace, to all people, both believers and unbelievers. When Adam and Eve sinned, they became worthy of eternal punishment and separation from God (Genesis 2:17). When human beings sin today they become liable to the wrath of God and to eternal punishment. In Romans 6:23, we are reminded: "the wages of sin is death" – a spiritual death. That means that once people sin, God's justice would require only one thing, that they be eternally separated from God, cut off from experiencing any good from him. This is what happened to angels who sinned,

²⁰ Jones, 156-7.

²¹ McGrath, 353-4.

“God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgment” (2 Peter 2:4).²² Romans 6:23 continues: “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God bestows common grace to all people (including children). Common grace is the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that flow indirectly from Christ’s redemptive work. Common grace is not restricted to certain people. Romans 3:23-24 says: “since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” God did not judge the world at once when sin entered; it was primarily due to the fact that he planned eventually to save sinners through the death of his Son.²³

John Wesley defines grace as most fundamentally God’s love for humanity made evident in Christ. The nature of grace is love. This grace, when it is received, both communicates forgiveness and makes renewal possible. “That amazing display of the Son of God’s love to mankind” is what brings about reconciliation. And this love is “the chief ground of (our response) love, . . . (as) is plainly declared by the Apostle Paul: “We love him, because he first loved us.”²⁴

Grace is manifested in three ways: in our creation, in God’s forgiveness, and in our transformation or re-creation. “It was free grace that ‘formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul,’ and stamped on that soul the image of God, and ‘put all things under his feet.’ The same free grace continues to us, at this day, life,

²² Grudem, 657.

²³ Grudem, 658.

²⁴ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 26.

and breath, and all things. . . Whatever righteousness may be found in man, this also is the gift of God.” And in his Collection of Forms of Prayer, Wesley prays for the grace that is pardon and the grace that is transforming:

O that we may all receive of (Christ’s) fullness, grace upon grace; grace to pardon our sins, and subdue our iniquities; to justify our persons and to sanctify our souls; and to complete that holy change, that renewal of our hearts, whereby we may be transformed into that blessed image wherein thou didst create us.²⁵

Through Christology, the work of Christ, we have the capacity to recognize and value children as wonderful creations of God, who are fully human, whole-yet-broken gifts and participants in God’s realm.²⁶ Joyce Mercer, author of *Welcoming Children*, conducted a research project in which she studied practices with children in congregations and listened to stories of children as well as adults to see how God was at work in their lives. She searched for a child-affirming theology and a church that genuinely welcomes children, cares about their wellbeing, and advocates for them in situations in which they are marginalized or harmed. The stories she heard from youth and adults involved various forms of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in their childhoods, as well as stories of family love and care, of right relationships lived out among family members. Then there were stories about oppression by violence, poverty, gender, race, and class exploitation. She met children exploited for cheap labor, treated as objects for all kinds of gratification of another’s desires, and children who were alone, with no family and no home. There is a human need for just relationships between

²⁵ Runyon, 27.

²⁶ Joyce Ann Mercer, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), vi-vii.

children as vulnerable people and the communities of care and support on which they depend.

Christian faith is an identity into which persons are formed. It has the power to oppose the destructive identities consumer culture offers today.²⁷ Church leaders can support families in their efforts to nurture children in the Christian faith, which stands in such contrast to the consumer culture swirling all around us. Jesus Christ is at work transforming the whole of creation, including the situations of families who struggle with brokenness and the negative effects of generational sexual abuse involving their minor child.²⁸

In *Welcoming Children, a Practical Theology of Childhood*, author Joyce Ann Mercer considers how God is at work in children's lives. She says, "this theology is concerned with truth and offers a valid and adequate account of the practice of Christian faith in a context in which human beings strive to live lives in relation to God's reign. However, if the theological perspective violates what Christian faith affirms about God, such as, asserting a parallel between a patriarchal father God and patriarchal fathers who act as stand-in figures for God in relation to their children, or any activity involving oppression, sexual exploitation, or abuse of children, then the context of the theology would be unjust."

²⁷ Mercer, 1-42

²⁸ Mercer, 1-42

Mercer continues to say, “the Bible is a witness to God whose being entails freedom, love, and justice and whose actions in relation to humanity work toward the realization of liberation in the lives of all people, including children.”²⁹

Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me. Mark 9:37. Mercer refers to the scripture of Mark as it offers a variety of witnesses to God’s nature and activity in relation to children. Other sources are human experience, Christian tradition, and new sources of insight that can come from various theoretical perspectives such as educational or social theory. The call of Christian discipleship is a call to work for the transformation of children’s sufferings and healing for the family members who are affected by the hurt and pain caused by the involvement of minors in sexual abuse.

Mercer says, “The Gospel of Mark depicts children as central to the story of God’s grace in Jesus. It addresses issues of social and economic class differences as central concerns of faith. It reiterates the themes of the reign of God and meaning of Christian discipleship. Mark tells what it means to be a part of the reign of God through stories of Jesus’ connection with children who struggle with in-justice. In Mark 35-37 Jesus blesses children whose low social position place them in sharp contrast to the desired positions of honor and power that Jesus’ disciples wanted and Mark tells them what it means to follow Jesus. Children are a primary means for Mark to tell his version of the story of Jesus with its good news of God’s grace!

Mercer continues to say, “This is a theology that welcomes children with sociopolitical content. Communities in the Galilean region struggled under the

²⁹ Mercer, 1-42.

conditions of agrarian life and those of Roman imperial rule. Mark's gospel took shape in a patriarchal context in which cultural patterns of honor and shame amplified the oppression and abuse of children. Jews living in Palestine were undergirded by a theological tradition and assenting only to the rule of God and not to any human ruler."³⁰

According to Mercer, "Mark's gospel emerged as a counter-narrative, a story against the dominant story of empire where the conflict of power stands at the center. The "kingdom of God" in opposition to the rule of empire takes center stage in the drama. Mark's gospel is a critical commentary on the conflict where Jesus proclaims radical reconfiguration of healing power in his ministry.

In this story of political power and economic exploitation children appear incidental to the story of the reign of God. Children become crucial as persons deeply disenfranchised, oppressed and abused under imperial rule and as those who experience the greatest sense of hope and healing.

Mark asserts a different version of renewed hope and healing of community and social relationships that allow even the most weak and vulnerable to become strong; serving and following the way of Jesus become primary practices by which life is valued; social relationships are rearranged when doing the will of God; there is hope for a better future in a new life now and in a new resurrection life with Jesus."³¹

In his book, *From Hurt to Healing, A Theology of the Wounded*, author Dr. Andrew Park says many people suffer from pain caused by a deep wound called "han." "When people have deep wounds that are not healed, the wounds become vortexes of

³⁰ Mercer, 43-67.

³¹ Mercer, 43-67.

troubled waters, intertwined with their own instinct of survival and fear. The church has no doctrine to help the theological journey of healing for victims or family members who were affected by the occurrence of sexual abuse. Christians are called to spread to the world a holistic gospel based on biblical teachings. When victims and offenders understand each other better and work together to bring true reconciliation into their communities by promoting mutual respect, encouragement, forgiveness and cooperation, they accompany each other on a journey to healing and forgiveness. In the Roman Catholic Church between 1986 and 2002, fourteen priests committed suicide in the United States. There were no theological guidelines for the victims of sexual abuse by a priest to follow toward the healing of their wounds and leading a priest to repent of his sins. The people sexually abused by priests were left alone in terms of pursuing the healing of their own wounds, leaving the victim developing shame about the abuse and the abuser suffering from guilt. The Catholic Church has been busy settling a number of sexual abuse cases of priests out of court, neglecting the well being of the victims.³²

A case story involves a mother who was a victim of domestic violence and abuse in the home. The mother was addicted to alcohol and cigarettes from the time she was a teenager. Her husband verbally, emotionally, physically, and sexually abused the mother repeatedly, almost on a daily basis. Dr. Park describes her as the collapsed anguish of the heart, and a rupture in the soul caused by abuse, injustice, and violence.³³ At one time the mother was a young, vibrant, beautiful woman, but slowly through the years her personality changed and she became withdrawn and hopeless. Her pain became the

³² Park, Andrew, *From Hurt to Healing: Theology of the Wounded*, (Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press, 2004), 1-6.

³³ Park, 7-20.

burden of her daughter, who felt responsible to help her mother. The daughter felt the intense grief for sometime after her mother passed away, however, one night while sleeping, Jesus appeared in a vision. Jesus was sitting down with the mother at his feet. He spoke and said, “You don’t have to worry about your mother anymore. She is with me now and I’m taking care of her.” Through grace and forgiveness, Jesus lifted the pain of guilt and grief, and the daughter felt healed and whole.

Dr. Park says, “When there is forgiveness, healing is an ongoing process, transpiring gradually under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is a vital instrument in healing han. Healing occurs when victims allow the healing stream of the Spirit to flow. The victim becomes cleansed from han and experiences healing, a gift from God. This transforms them into agents of grace in healing others. Healing occurs through self-denial, and involves denying distorted self-images and restoring of the image of God. Wounded healers partake in transforming the collective levels of han making the broken world whole.”³⁴

“Henry Nouwen in his book, *The Wounded Healer*, articulates how the wounded can use their hurt and imperfection as an avenue of grace in working for the healing of others. Their own need for healing leads into the healing of others’ wounds. Jesus is the ultimate wounded healer. Through Jesus’ woundedness, he heals the wounded. 1 Peter 2:24: “By His wounds you have been healed.”

“Healing takes place in relating to God and others, for it is relational in nature. Being made whole is the natural consequence of deepening our spiritual fellowship with

³⁴ Park, 131-32.

the God of wholeness. The victims who strive first for God's reign in other victims' lives can experience God's reign in the present through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who touches and heals the victims by leading them step-by-step to their wholeness."³⁵

In Him we have redemption (deliverance) through His blood, the remission (forgiveness) of our offenses (trespasses), in accordance with the riches and the generosity of His gracious favor, which He lavished upon us in every kind of wisdom and understanding (practical insight). . . in accordance with His good pleasure (mercy) which He had previously purposed and set forth in Him.

Ephesians 1:7-9

Christianity is a faith whose central focus is grace, redemption, forgiveness, healing, and mercy. Our God is a God of grace and mercy. The process of forgiveness begins with our awareness and understanding of our own sin. As Jesus hung on the cross, he demonstrated the ultimate in forgiveness, praying for those that were putting him to death. "Father," he said, "forgive them, for they know not what they do." Finally, shortly after his resurrection, Jesus commanded his disciples to announce the forgiveness of sins. "Whomever you forgive," he told them, "I forgive."³⁶ We complicate Christianity. In our broken world, it is through God's grace and mercy that redemption, forgiveness, and healing happen. The Psalms are filled with references to God's mercy and grace. Psalm 107:1 is an example: "O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy and loving-kindness endure forever!" David was a man who loved God very much, yet he made serious mistakes. He experienced the mercy of God in his life³⁷

³⁵ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York, NY: Image Book Doubleday, 1994).

³⁶ Adam Hamilton, *Forgiveness: Finding Peace in Letting Go* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), 17-22.

³⁷ Joyce Meyer, *New Day, New You* (New York, NY: Faith Words, 2007), 158-159.

Mercer says, “In the Gospel of Mark one notices children are central to the story of God’s grace in Jesus. Notice the children appear to change from being dirty, sick and oppressed into multifaceted, affirmed and blessed. They are the ones who embody the reign of God and faithfulness in their walk with Jesus to the end. The issue of social and economic class differences were concerns of faith for the people of the times. The whole gospel story is that the kingdom of God is present for all people, not only to the people of standing, wealth, and power. Jesus taught his disciples to be humble, to serve those who had less, and to be sensitive to the needs of others. In the patriarchal society of the times children were literally treated as possessions, as not-fully-human. Jesus’ message that the kingdom politics lift up the lowliest is accentuated by the child’s low social standing.”³⁸

Theologian Karl Barth wrote, “In parenting, to be able to view their children from the divine angle and therefore as children of God.”³⁹ “To look at children from the perspective of God, is a way of seeing them and loving them that does not split them into angels or demons, but sees them whole. The “God’s eye” view of a child is a view of a human being who both participates in the flawed ways of all of humanity yet always already is graced by God. The opportunity parents have to view their children from a “Godward” direction as Barth described is a call for parents to view their children as people who from the first live fully in the grace of God, from whose perspective they are already blessed, chosen, and beloved. Parenting from this perspective is an invitation to

³⁸ Mercer, 239-265.

³⁹ Karl Barth and G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, ed., *Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, Part 4* (Edinburg, England: T & T Clark, 1961), 281.

treat children as the children of God that they are.”⁴⁰ Children are a gift from God, and yet they bring many challenges, difficulties, problems, and sometimes even grief or pain to everyday life for parents and families, even under the best of circumstances. Incidents of sexual abuse are devastating to all who are involved, including the children, members of the family, and the churches. Fortunately for us, “God bestows common grace: the grace of God by which He gives people innumerable blessings.”⁴¹ There are many examples of God’s common grace: such as, in the physical realm - every breath people take, the earth produces food and shelter, and beauty of the natural world; in the intellectual realm – people are able to grasp truth and distinguish it from error, allowing people to have growth in knowledge; in the moral realm – restrains people from being as evil as they could be, an inward sense of right and wrong; in the creative realm – measures of skill in artistic, musical, and creative areas, as well as physical and intellectual; in the societal realm – structures in human society, family, government, educational institutions, businesses, voluntary associations, human friendship; in the religious realm – influences and enriches the church, teachings of scripture, presence of those whose lives have changed by the Gospel.⁴²

⁴⁰ Mercer, 246.

⁴¹ Grudem, 657.

⁴² Grudem, 658-663.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

There are many resources, ideas, and methods to glean from other disciplines, such as sociology, and psychology, that address the issues relevant to “unbolting the door” to child sexual abuse awareness and the role of education and forgiveness in providing pastoral care and support to families broken as a result of child sexual abuse. Excellent information found in books and journal articles, ministries, workshops, task forces, and child advocacy agencies is available to equip clergy, seminary students, faith based counselors, and teachers to minister to families with children involved in child sexual abuse, or other social issues.

Child sexual abuse is a generational dysfunctional pattern of behavior causing negative affects that lead to the breakdown in relationships of family members. These patterns can be evaluated, affects can be improved, and through forgiveness broken families can be healed. Child sexual abuse is a complex problem. Darkness to Light is a national organization that seeks to empower adults to prevent child sexual abuse. The training workshop program, *Stewards of Children*, raises awareness and educates adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.¹

Darkness to Light *Stewards of Children* promotes a personal child sexual abuse protection plan, which includes five steps: Step one: Learn the facts – Child sexual abuse

¹ Darkness to Light, *Stewards of Children Interactive Workbook* (Charleston, SC: 2013).

makes children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation; child pornography is child sexual abuse; 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser. Step two: Minimize the opportunity – eliminate or reduce isolated, one-on-one situations; monitor internet use; code of conduct in organization. Step three: Talk about it – have age appropriate conversations about bodies, sex, and boundaries; parents need to tell their kids about the act of sex by the age of eight. Step four: Recognize the signs – learn the signs in children and teens; anxiety, withdrawal, fear, depression, or anger; with some children there are no signs. Step five: React responsibly – understand how to respond to disclosures, discoveries, and suspicions of sexual abuse; offer support, don't overreact, report to the police or child protective services; request a child advocacy center be used; bystander intervention (a person who witnesses a boundary violation, or sees a situation in which a child is vulnerable).

According to information available through Faith Trust Institute of Seattle, WA, a situation of sexual abuse can involve contact between a significantly older, more powerful juvenile, or an adult, with another younger child. Younger children are not developmentally capable of understanding or resisting sexual contact and may be psychologically and socially dependent upon an offender who is older. In addition to sexual contact, sexual abuse can include other exploitive behaviors such as inappropriate verbal stimulation of a child, taking or showing sexually explicit photographs of or to a child, or exposing a child to pornography, adult sexual activity.²

Most people in communities learn from the media, such as television, Internet, or newspaper stories of abuse in our society, however, they are not aware of the statistics of

² Faith Trust Institute, *What you need to know if a child is being abused or neglected*, (Seattle, WA: 1992, Revised 2012): accessed September 10, 2012, <http://faithtrustinstitute.org>.

the many cases that happen to children, so they don't see the urgency of the situation.

Childhelp is a national organization founded in 1959 and based in Phoenix, Arizona, for the prevention and treatment of child abuse. According to Childhelp, children are suffering from a hidden epidemic of child abuse and understanding the issue is the first step to stop this widespread war against our children. Every year more than 3 million reports of child abuse are made in the U.S. involving more than 6 million children. Statistics show it is estimated that five children die everyday in our nation as a result of abuse, and 80% of the children are under the age of 4. Children whose parents abuse alcohol and other drugs are three times more likely to be abused.³

According to Childhelp, child abuse can occur at every socioeconomic level across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education. Mental health, and sexual health issues include addictions such as alcoholism, drug use, early initiation of sexual activity, and multiple sexual partners. In one study, 80% of 21-year olds who reported childhood abuse met the criteria for at least one psychological disorder. For new cases in 2008 alone, lifetime estimates of lost worker productivity, health care costs, special education costs, child welfare expenditure and criminal justice expenditures added up to \$124 billion.⁴

Child abuse in the U.S. was recognized on March 27, 2007, when President George W. Bush made a proclamation for National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and stated that family members, educators, public officials and faith-based and community organizations all play important roles in helping to ensure that children are safe and can

³ Childhelp, *Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse* (Phoenix, AZ) accessed September 10, 2012, <http://childhelp-usa.com/pages/statistics>.

⁴ Childhelp, Facts and statistics.

grow surrounded by love and stability. He promoted continuing vital mentoring and family programs.⁵

Child abuse was recognized in the U.S. again on April 1, 2009, when President Barack Obama made a proclamation to help educate and strengthen families, community members can offer their time and counsel to parents and children who may need assistance, for example, parent support groups provide an organized forum for assistance, or provide a helping hand to families under stress. Civic groups offer support through education, assistance to those at risk and treatment for victims.⁶

Sexual abuse is a generational dysfunctional pattern of behavior that causes negative affects that lead to broken relationships in families. We can evaluate these behavior patterns, and learn how brokenness can be healed. A recent article, *Understanding the Family as a System*, written by H. Dan Smith says that a family system functions because it is a unit, and every family member plays a critical role in the system. It is not possible that one member of the system can change without causing a ripple effect of change throughout the family system. This provides a solid framework for understanding how families function and how to support their change. The systems view deemphasizes blaming the family's problems on a given family member. With accurate identification of the process that sustains painful or stressful conditions in the family, change for the better can be both profound and permanent.⁷

⁵ George W. Bush, National Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation on March 27, 2007, accessed March 1, 2016, whitehouse.gov.

⁶ Barack Obama, National Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation on April 1, 2009, accessed March 1, 2016, whitehouse.gov.

⁷ H. Dan Smith, "Understanding the Family as a System", *School of Education and Development, California State University Newsletter*, accessed March 15, 2016, <http://smith.soehd.csufresno.edu>.

The field of social work has responded to child sexual abuse through school-based interventions that teach children how to protect themselves. Article written by April Kopp, entitled *Child Sexual Abuse and Social Connection* from the 2008 issue of the *Advocates' Forum*, published by the School of Social Service at University of Chicago, reports in the past few decades the response to the child sexual abuse (CSA) problem has consisted of prevention education for children. Her recommendation is to enhance adult responsibility for addressing CSA and social connection between children and their parents or caregivers.⁸ In the same article, according to Patricia Crittenden (1998), “Child abuse is an interactive process consisting of three parts: (a) in each instance, (b) across the childhood of each child, and (c) across generations as children mature and become parents.” Children who have been sexually abused may experience the negative sequelae, defined by the Oxford American College Dictionary as conditions that are the consequence of previous conditions of child sexual abuse across the lifespan, and the effects of abuse may ripple across generations. The article refers to negative outcomes for children who have experienced CSA and are at high risk for physical and psychological effects that may cause distress. Research suggests child sexual abuse is preventable, and the persistence of the problem indicates the need for systemic changes in the ways by which caregivers connect with children (Mark Moore, 1995).

Statistics show one out of four children in Michigan lives in poverty. Children should have the opportunity to succeed no matter where they live or how much money is in their parent's bank account. 42 percent of children raised in poverty stay in poverty as

⁸ April L. Kopp, Patricia M. Crittenden, and Mark H. Moore, “Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Social Connection” *Advocates Forum*, (2008), accessed March 15, 2016, www.ssa.uchicago.edu.

adults.⁹ The Michigan State of Opportunity Project is looking at what can be done to break the cycle of poverty and improve opportunities for Michigan's most disadvantaged children. They are examining the impact that healthcare, schools, family, local community and public policy have on child development from cradle to college.

When we look at our society, we see families unraveling. Leslie Fields' journal article in *Christianity Today*, states nearly half are unmarried mothers. About one in five U.S. children are raised below the poverty line. 40 percent of first time marriages will fail, leaving children in relational crisis and loss. More than 7 million children live with a parent who has alcohol or drug problems, and one in four families are affected by mental illness. Among families with two parents, about half (44 percent) are headed by two parents who work; another one in four families (26 percent) are headed by a single working parent, leaving these adults absent far more from their children than they would like. In her article, *What We Forgot About Forgiveness*, Fields says, "Even relatively healthy and stable homes suffer from wounds and deficiencies. Every parent is plagued by failures. If our own families and children are to break free from generational sins, we will need to learn and practice forgiveness toward those who often have hurt us most: our mothers and fathers."¹⁰

Jill Hubbard, a clinical psychologist with New Life Ministries in Laguna Beach, CA, sees the fallout of family brokenness. "Half the people I see each week are battling some degree of unforgiveness, especially of parents," she said, "They may not always

⁹ State of Opportunity Project, Facts and Statistics.

¹⁰ Leslie Leyland Fields, "What We Forgot About Forgiveness" *Christianity Today*, 58 No. 4, May, 2014, 30-35, accessed March 10, 2015.

realize the condition of their hearts, but you can see in their lives the replay of the hurts they have not dealt with.”

According to the social learning and ecological research theories stated in The National Institute of Justice publication, October, 1997, child abuse can result from multiple factors, and interventions have the purpose of stopping current and future abuse by teaching both the parent and the child appropriate relationship skills within the family: (1) Individual, which varies by the degree of influence; (2) Family Systems, understand through a process of identifying problems as consequence of dysfunctional relationships among family members; (3) Self-efficiency, and personal characteristics of the child, and if they will start and continue actions; (4) Resilience, severity, and frequency of the abuse, age of the victim, and relationship to the offender can affect later adjustment. Factors such as social support, parental warmth and healthy adult support can influence healthy development and avoidance of delinquent behavior. Resiliency explains why children may not inevitably be damaged by child abuse.

Patricia McClendon, in the article, *Systems Theory and Social Abuse of Children*, describes the systems approach to human behavior with two general assumptions: (1) The state of the system is a function of the interaction between it and the environment in which it operates. (2) Change and conflict are always evident in a system. Individuals both influence their environments and are influenced by them. Processes of mutual influence generate change and development. Each person in the family is part of the whole system. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Within the family boundary are the members and their roles, norms, values, traditions and goals. Families whose boundaries are open and flexible are healthier. Typically there are three

subsystems in a family system: parents, parent-child, and siblings. The power structure in healthy families is hierarchical, with the parents sharing equal power and children having input in a democratic fashion. Unhealthy family systems have closed boundaries with fixed and rigid connections; without equal power, the higher level (father) usually rules, and the lower level (mother/siblings) are subservient.¹¹ In a family who experiences child sexual abuse, the more you know about the family system, the more you can make sense of what happened.

A wide variety of long-term effects have been associated with experiences of childhood sexual abuse including depression, anxiety, self-destructive behavior, social isolation, poor sexual adjustment and dysfunction, substance abuse, and an increase risk of victimization. Interestingly, there has been a dramatic increase in the child sexual abuse literature available. Much of the sexual abuse literature has been criticized as lacking adequate theoretical models for conceptualizing the long-term effects of abuse. The adult consequences associated with child sexual abuse are conceptualized within a theoretical framework based on a theory of emotional avoidance. Child sexual abuse was defined as any “forced or coerced behavior imposed on a child, and sexual activity between a child and an older person, whether or not obvious coercion is involved”.¹²

Research conducted over the past decade indicates that a wide range of psychological and interpersonal problems are more prevalent among those who have been sexually abused than among individuals with no such experience. The various problems and symptoms involving child sexual abuse can be divided into broad

¹¹ Patricia D. McClendon, “Systems Theory and Sexual Abuse of Children: Focus on Families and Communities”, *Pat McClendon’s Clinical Social Work Blog*, Fall, 1991, accessed March 10, 2015.

¹² Pollusny and Follette, “Long-term Correlates of Child Sexual Abuse: Theory and Review of the Empirical Literature”, *Applied and Preventative Psychology* 4: 143-166 (1995), accessed March 10, 2015.

categories found to be useful in understanding behavior. These are: post traumatic stress, cognitive distortions, emotional distress (depression, anger, anxiety), and avoidance (substance abuse, addiction, suicide, impaired sense of self, and interpersonal difficulties.)

Family characteristics and response to abuse disclosure also predict subsequent levels of distress. Child victims and adult survivors are often more distressed if their families have conflict dysfunction. As many as one fourth of all sexually abused children report no initial abuse related problems within two years of their abuse.¹³

As stated in a ten-year research review on child sexual abuse by Dr. Frank Putnam, M.D., family constellation, the absence of one or both parents, is a significant risk factor. The presence of a stepfather in the house doubles the risk for girls. Parental impairments, maternal illness, maternal alcoholism, maternal absences, marital conflicts, substance abuse, social isolation, and punitive parenting have all been associated with increased risk in some studies. Research suggests that there may be differential gender effects influencing cross-generational transmission of child abuse, with fathers more likely to abuse their offspring and mothers more likely to fail to protect their children.¹⁴

In the family, children should be able to expect protection and warmth from the home and when this doesn't happen, the child feels betrayed and fearful. When a child observes incest, the trauma can be as devastating as for the victim, with fear and lack of

¹³ John N. Briere and Diana M. Elliott, "Immediate and Long-term Impacts of Child Sexual Abuse", *Future of Children*, Vol. 4 no 2, Sum/Fall 1994, 54-69, accessed March 15, 2015.

¹⁴ Frank W. Putnam, "Ten-year Research Update Review: Child Sexual Abuse", *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, Vol. 2, no. 3, 2003, 269-78, accessed March 15, 2015.

control leading to helplessness. With a father abusing a mother, the trauma is more devastating, with fear of loss of the mother, family breakup and financial insecurity.¹⁵

Schools are the one institution in our society regularly attended by most young people. Nearly 95 percent of all youth aged 5-17 years are enrolled in elementary or secondary schools, according to National Center for Education Statistics, 1993. Research studies of students show: (1) involvement in school and plans for higher education are related to less sexual risk taking and lower pregnancy rates; (2) schools in poverty and disorganization have higher pregnancy rates; (3) The Seattle Social Development Project was designed to increase bonding to school and family through improved instructional techniques and voluntary programs for parents. The results showed reduced teen pregnancy among youth followed by the study.¹⁶

In early church history, there were issues of brokenness in the church resulting from disagreements regarding the collection of monies and power. Some of the people rebelled against the injustice of the hierarchy. During the Protestant Reformation people challenged the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, causing separation and brokenness in the church. The hierarchy was more interested in money and power than in leading a simple life of poverty. Martin Luther, a German priest, criticized the role of the church for “indulgences” (the forgiveness of sins) in exchange for money and was excommunicated in 1521.¹⁷

¹⁵ Irene Loewen, “Child Sexual Abuse in the Church”, *Direction*, Spr 1986, Vol. 15, no 1, accessed March 15, 2015.

¹⁶ Douglas Kirby, “The Impact of Schools and School Programs Upon Adolescent Sexual Behavior”, *ETR Associates* (Scotts Valley, CA) accessed March 15, 2015.

¹⁷ Miranda T Smith, *The Kingfisher History Encyclopedia: The Protestant Revolution* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2004) 214.

John Calvin had followers in France, Germany, and Holland. Calvin arrived in Geneva, Switzerland in 1536 and created a Model of Ministry. He began his work in Geneva as one of the ministers, and he used his gift for organization by drawing up a catechism and confession of faith. The children of Geneva played an important part in Calvin's religious education program. The children earned and experienced a sense of family connection within the church.¹⁸ When many of the refugees arrived in Geneva after the worst of the 1555 crisis they saw a place of enthusiasm, learning devotion, and determination.¹⁹

One can imagine that these adults and children who were refugees from their homeland were seeking a place where they could live without oppression. A similar idea could be created for a support ministry for families dealing with sexual abuse as a "safe harbor" in the church.

The Model of Ministry that John Wesley led began with three theological students who were involved in social work in the city focused on poor families in a school for underprivileged children. For years some 20 children from poor families were given an education they would otherwise have been denied. John Wesley took measures to relieve the poor, which were prompted by his own perception of the misery he encountered in his travels and visits to families, factories, hospitals, workhouses, and prisons. Wesley emphasized personal contact with those people who needed help. According to Wesley's conviction, children are to be regarded as creatures of God who are destined for blessedness. For Wesley, all children were the love of humankind. Wesley believed love awakens the conscience to unlimited responsibility for others, regardless of their religious, moral, or social character. Love gives the practical power to transcend the boundaries of race, nationality, and social stratification, and to recognize all persons as recipients of loving gift.²⁰

The challenge of churches today is to reach out and continue this ethic and offer ministry to all God's children in our urban communities. Without the church ministry, the future is bleak for many of these children, especially for those who are oppressed and

¹⁸ E. William Monter, *Calvin's Geneva* (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1967).

¹⁹ Wm. G. Naphy, *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 25-26.

²⁰ Manfred Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics, Praxis and Principles* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992) 23-25.

live in broken families where poverty, and abusive situations exist and there is no way to leave, change, or improve their living conditions.

The people who live in the urban neighborhoods of the city have been affected by many factors in the community they are located. Some of those factors include economy, environment, sustainability of faith morals, and values, responsibility of being a parent, and searching for healing of brokenness.

Often, when minors are left alone for long periods of time without adult role models or supervision, many children are vulnerable and at high risk to being exposed to an environment involving negative behavior such as the incidents of sexual abuse, or misuse of alcohol, drugs, violence, stealing, or human trafficking.²¹

In the case of those children who come from poor families, it is likely that they still need to work and help with expenses. When there are no jobs available, these kids become “street kids” where they are vulnerable to gangs, crime, or human trafficking. When there is less money available for kids who live in poverty, the necessity of dropping out of school is an option in order to survive economically.

Statistics show that one out of four children in Michigan lives in poverty. Children should have the opportunity to succeed, no matter where they live or how much money is in their parent’s bank account. 42 percent of children raised in poverty stay in poverty as adults.²²

The Michigan State of Opportunity Project is “looking at what can be done to break the cycle of poverty and improve opportunities for Michigan’s most disadvantaged

²¹ David Claerbaut, *Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983) 80.

²² State of Opportunity Project, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, stateofopportunity.michiganradio.org.

children. They are examining the impact that healthcare, schools, family, the local community, and public policy have on child development from cradle to college.”

‘Pornography Pandemic’: New Article Reveals ‘Eye-Opening’ Dangers of Internet Porn written by Billy Hallowell states some interesting facts about the impact of pornography use, claiming that it has become a dangerous pandemic that threatens adults, and minor children. He says Donna Rice Hughes, CEO and president of “Enough is Enough,” a nonprofit organization devoted to ensuring the Internet as a safe place for children, recently wrote a research article on the subject titled, *“The Internet Pornography Pandemic.”* The article was published in the Christian Apologetics Journal. On the subject of pornography, Hughes claims it has a harmful impact on the emotional, mental and sexual health of young children. Porn sometimes overshadows parents in teaching kids about sex, and takes the lead in educating children on very important life issues. It teaches sex without love, intimacy, tender touch, responsibility, and commitment. Rather than merely exploring the moral parameters surrounding porn use, Hughes argues that there is a need to address how smut is harming public health. Her goal is to create a movement aimed at helping to curb porn usage. Hughes concluded by calling on the faith community to take the lead, noting that correcting societal issues is the job of the Christian church at large.²³

An article was published regarding the subject of ‘human trafficking’ written by Amanda Kloer, an editor with CNN. Kloer organizes and promotes campaigns to end human trafficking, and she has created numerous reports, documentaries and training materials. This crime affects the minor children and adults in the communities where we

²³ Donna Rice Hughes, “The Internet Pornography Pandemic”, *Christian Apologetics Journal*, Accessed March 10, 2016, EBSCO Industries, Inc.

live. Kloer has listed five things to know about human trafficking, including sex trafficking: (1) Human sex trafficking is slavery – exploitation of people for sex, trafficking is a business that generates billions of dollars a year, and victims are trapped physically, psychologically, financially or emotionally; (2) It is happening where you live – young children (average age is twelve) have been forced into prostitution; (3) It is happening to people just like you – it does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, gender or religion; (4) Products you eat, wear, and use every day may have been made by human trafficking victims - human trafficking victims are forced to make many of the products we use everyday; (5) We can stop human trafficking and sex trafficking in our lifetime – everyone needs to work together.²⁴

As written by Phyllis Kilbourn and Marjorie McDermid the sexual exploitation of children is a deeply troubling issue. Conditions of poverty, suffering, violence, and greed turn God's innocent creatures into slaves who suffer horrible abuses day after day. Through the work of prevention, intervention, concern for caregivers, and special concerns involved in working with children who have been victims of sexual abuse for economic exploitation there is hope that other innocent children might not be allowed to grow up without becoming victims.²⁵

The purpose of this ministry project is to “unbolt the door” and raise awareness of child sexual abuse. Through education and forgiveness, provided through Pastoral Care, broken families will be assisted in their healing in child sexual abuse. The problem is not new, and neither is the solution. There are different situations and different methods to

²⁴ Amanda Kloer, “Five Things to Know About Human Trafficking”, *The Freedom project blog*, accessed April 10, 2016, <http://thefreedomprojectblog.cnn.com>.

²⁵ Kilbourn McDermid, and Marjorie McDermid, “*Sexually Exploited Children: Working to Protect and Heal* (Monrovia, CA: MARC Publications, 1998), accessed April 10, 2016.

apply in each child sexual abuse case that is theoretically, socially, and psychologically unique. However, the end goal of healing has not changed. Persons a child knows and trusts will at sometime abuse one in four girls. The ratio is a little less for boys. Experts believe sexual abuse is three to four times greater than is reported for statistical purposes. Though father-daughter sexual abuse accounts for 75% of incestuous relationships, we must not forget that sibling sexual abuse is also of concern.²⁶ The sexual needs of young people must be addressed. The incest taboo is one of the oldest taboos known to civilized persons, but for the church it is also a moral imperative.

²⁶ Kilbourn McDermid, and Marjorie McDermid.

CHAPTER SIX
PROJECT ANALYSIS
INTRODUCTION

God's undeserved, saving grace and forgiveness is healing in a broken world! That is a big statement to think about. It's also something for families of victims of child sexual abuse to be grateful for. As the pastor of an inner city church, I participated in a countywide quality of life research study involving 580 out of 740 ecumenical church congregations. The results of the study showed there were very few ministries focused on sexual abuse or sex education in churches. There is child sexual abuse happening, regardless of economics, ethnic background, or geographic location, surrounded by broken people. Following my retirement as a pastor, my church was closed, and I began the Doctor of Ministry Program. My focus of ministry was unclear when I entered the doctoral program. As I wrote my spiritual autobiography I felt God was calling me to a ministry of healing for families broken by sexual abuse of children. I recognize how God has prepared me through my personal experiences to develop a child sexual abuse awareness ministry. Through research in the doctoral program God has revealed to me how the generational pattern of child sexual abuse behavior and attitude continues, and how everyone in the family is affected. This generational pattern is found in the Biblical Historical, Theological, and Theoretical Foundation studies. As a child of an alcoholic mother and an angry dad, with a raging, violent temper, I was a victim of emotional,

sexual, and physical abuse in my family, and in my relationship with boy friends. I was traumatized as a witness of my dad's abuse of my mother, and my siblings. I was devastated when my grandchildren were involved in inappropriate sexual touching. The solution is found in the Biblical New Testament scripture. Through counseling, the power of the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness, I survived, and recovered. Forgiveness is the key that 'unbolts the door' to healing and improved family relationships. With forgiveness, when I gave my hurts and pain to God, the negative feelings were lifted, and replaced with inner healing.

God was calling me to a ministry of healing for families impacted by the sexual abuse of children. The lyrics of a well-known song found in the United Methodist Hymnal acclaims, 'Here I am, Lord! It is I Lord, I have heard you calling in the night; I will go Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart.' David L. Schutte wrote 'Here I am, Lord' in 1981. The people I hold in my heart are the families broken when children are sexually abused. Isaiah 6:8 said, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'here I am; send me!'"

When I was a child, I knew my dad was abusive, but no one in the family wanted to talk about it or report the abuse. When I was about age ten my dad told me I didn't fit in the family because I was different. I was confused and I thought there was something wrong with me. Today, I understand; I was the only one who paid attention to the elephant in the middle of the room. The other people in the family chose to walk around the elephant.

I found there is a lack of communication regarding child sexual abuse in our society. It is an uncommon topic of conversation, wherever we live or worship, work or

vacation. Many facts and statistics about sexual abuse are not known or understood. One fact is 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser. People can be encouraged to report when a sexual abuse incident happens, including within the family. This could involve a parent, sibling, cousin, etc. Another fact is 90% of children who are involved in human trafficking have been sexually abused in their past. Abuse makes children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Child pornography is sexual abuse; it is illegal to produce or possess child pornography in any form.

There are many facts and case studies that can be useful knowledge and bring understanding to address the issues. The role of forgiveness in providing pastoral care for broken families when child sexual abuse happens is the key to “unbolt the door” to healing the wounds and helping family members to be more confident in contributing an action toward a future society with less child sexual abuse. Every adult is mandated to report disclosures, discoveries, and suspicions to the police or child protective services.

Methodology

While interviewing my professional associates, I studied many different recommended approaches and methods of presenting a ministry project of child sexual abuse. Also, through research, I became familiar with many facts and cases. While I served as a pastor, I was Abuse Prevention Chairperson for the United Methodist West Michigan Conference, so my background included useful information. The information in books, journal articles, LOGOS Bible Software, and commentaries is overwhelming. Fortunately, I took a child sexual abuse awareness training held at United Theological Seminary, and sponsored by Darkness to Light, a National nonprofit organization, to

raise awareness and educate adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Following that training, I enrolled in a Facilitator's training, where I studied, became certified, and authorized to teach adult trainings. The workbook and video, called *Stewards of Children*, contains eight case studies, which are used to teach the training. I chose this method of teaching the child sexual abuse awareness portion of my project. I find the workbook and video to be excellent resources, and they explain the facts using actual cases.

For the pastoral care portion of my ministry project, the combination of information on the topics of forgiveness, family systems, and crisis and trauma intervention seem to be logical priorities when helping and supporting victims and families. It is helpful to use Keynote or Power Point software to present these topics.

Implementation of Project

Engaging assistants:

- Welcome participants! Hospitality table (Check on snacks, lunch, and beverages), Registration table
- Pre-post survey questionnaires
- Directions, questions, discussions, support
- Meet for prayer - prior
- Discussion and prayer – following

Preparation during the week prior to the ministry project workshop copies were made of the pre-post survey questions, and the resource handouts. A walk through the community room at the library to make sure the projector and the tables and chairs were set where they will need to be placed, and testing of the equipment to be used.

Table was set for reservations; clipboard for checking names and e-mail addresses. Display books on the table for easy, informational reading and resources, or other

handouts, agenda, nametags, and workbooks. Sign-up sheet on clipboard for “Unbolt the Door” blog; need name and e-mail address.

The ministry project workshop began with an introduction and welcome; participants filled out the true/false pre-survey statements survey and turned it in before beginning the workshop video. The two-part video consists of eight survivor case studies, and was combined with facilitator led discussions using the workbooks concluding each of the parts. At the end of the workshop, the true/false post statements were filled out and turned in.

A list of the pre-post survey statements, and the results follow:

Pre-Post Survey Statements

1. The definition of child sexual abuse includes only contact.	True	False
2. Sexually abused children are at a greater risk for emotional physical, and psychological problems.	True	False
3. 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse are abused by strangers.	True	False
4. Setting boundaries for one-on-one situations reduces the risk of child sexual abuse.	True	False
5. A code of conduct for churches describes how staff and volunteers will interact and conduct themselves with children.	True	False
6. Children with information about their bodies, boundaries and sex are more likely to be targeted for sexual abuse.	True	False
7. Physical signs like bruising and redness are more common than behavior signs.	True	False
8. Physical signs like anxiety, stomach, or headaches may occur.	True	False
9. When a child discloses sexual abuse, you should learn as many details as possible before reporting.	True	False

10. If you witness someone crossing boundaries with a child, describe the behavior, set a limit, move on when the child is safe True False

11. Sex trafficking of children does not happen in the community where I live. True False

Results of the Pre-Post Survey

Total Registrations:	18	Total Participants:	9
Cornerstone College	9	Cornerstone College	6
United Methodist	8	United Methodist	2
Baptist	1	Baptist	1

(total registrations include associates who were unable to attend)

9 participants attended the ministry workshop.

Education of participants:

High School	9
Bachelors Degree	7
Masters Degree	2
Doctor of Ministry	1

Occupation of participants:

Teachers	3
Counselors	3
College students	2
Pastor	1

Females	8
Males	1

The statements in which the participants changed their response:
#’s 4, 7, 8, 9, 10

The number of participants who changed their response:

Statement #	Participants
4	3
7	2
8	2
9	2
10	2

Content of Sessions - Child Sexual Abuse Education

Using a video and an interactive workbook, called *Stewards of Children*, Darkness to Light, a national nonprofit organization, the training consists of eight case studies, expert advice, and practical guidance for preventing child sexual abuse. Included were lessons on making choices, supporting each other, and simple strategies to prevent and respond to sexual abuse through Darkness to Light's Five Steps to Protecting Our Children.

The following material was covered in the video and workbook:¹

Making choices: 1. preparing and protecting children; 2. taking risks by setting sexual boundaries; 3. Supporting each other by giving support to others' efforts to prevent, and asking for support when needing help.

Five steps to protecting:

1. Learn the facts. 1 in 10 children are sexually abused before their 18th birthday.
 - A. Child sexual abuse thrives on denial and fear. Know what sexual abuse is – recognize its prevalence – understand how it occurs.
 - B. Human trafficking is child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse victims are vulnerable to sex trafficking.
 - C. Child pornography is child sexual abuse. It is illegal to produce or possess child pornography in any form.
 - D. Most child victims never report sexual abuse. 90% of victims know their abuser – 30% are abused by family members – 40% are abused by older children – youth who sexually offend children need to receive firm appropriate boundaries and professional help – when they do receive help they do not continue to sexually offend children as adults
2. Minimize the opportunity. Eliminate or reduce isolated, one-on-one situations.
 - A. Choose group situations, have multiple adults supervise
 - B. Grooming: an offender gradually draws a victim into a sexual relationship and maintains secrecy or may fill roles that make the offender trusted and valued
 - C. Monitor Internet use: create rules to keep it safe

¹ Darkness to Light, *Stewards of Children Interactive Workbook and Training Video* (Charleston, SC: 2013).

D. Code of Conduct: schools, churches, organizations should have available for staff, volunteers, and older youth who serve children

At this point, there is a break for facilitator led discussion, using a facilitator guide.

3. Talk about it.

A. Age appropriate open conversations about our bodies, sex, and boundaries. Understand why children are afraid to tell – recognize a child’s attempts to talk about their concerns – talk openly with children

B. Private parts. No one should ever touch you where a bathing suit covers – talking about safety from sexual abuse strengthens our relationships with our children

4. Recognize the signs. Know the signs of sexual abuse to protect children from further harm.

A. Learn the signs: physical and medical, emotional and behavioral, acting out, use of alcohol or drugs

B. Contact a professional when you suspect sexual abuse: signs don’t always mean sexual abuse, but can be a reason to take more interest in the child

5. React responsibly. Understand how to respond to disclosures, discoveries, and suspicions of sexual abuse.

A. Disclosure: a child has chosen you as the person to tell – it is a test of strength for families – offer support, don’t overreact

B. Discovery: when you’ve witnessed a sexually abusive act, report it immediately – if you discover child pornography, report it to the police.

C. Suspicion: at minimum, set some boundaries

D. Bystander intervention: A bystander is a person who witnesses a boundary violation, or sees a situation in which a child is vulnerable.

1. Reinforce the inappropriate behavior

2. Set a limit

3. Move on

At this point there is a break for facilitator led discussion, using facilitator guide.

Pastoral Care – Emphasis on Forgiveness

The Keynote/Power Point is used to present the pastoral care section of the child sexual abuse awareness workshop. Reference is made to the Old Testament 2 Samuel story of King David’s sexual abuse with women, then his son’s sexual abuse of his half sister. After Amnon rapes Tamar he throws her out and bolts the door. This scripture

illustrates the generational sin of sexual abuse, and the impact this makes on the victim and the family. Next, in the New Testament, by God's grace, Jesus brings forgiveness to heal the broken world. The Pastoral Care section includes: Forgiveness bringing healing; crisis and trauma intervention, child protection, and the family systems theory.

Summary of Learning – Participants' Interviews

During the discussions the participants were encouraged to ask questions, to discuss concerns, to talk about specific “take-aways” they have learned, and share examples of ways they can be actively involved in making a difference in preventing child sexual abuse.

The following are responses from the participants:

Regarding the facts of child sexual abuse:

1. How ugly is child abuse that it is happening in our faces and that we are doing very little to stop it.
2. I am a counselor, and the approach I am using is affirmed with clarity and understanding from the principles.
3. An overwhelming amount of good information! The most important I will take away is when and how to report suspected child sexual abuse and the countless number of children that are affected every day. 1 in 10 children just blows my mind! This means we all need to be aware and active in protecting children from possible abuse situations.
4. Much more understanding and awareness.
5. As a presenter of sex education to middle school students, I am thinking of ways to talk to teens about the risk of getting involved with human trafficking, so this way was well timed.

Responses from participants following the pastoral care section:

1. Sometimes the forgiveness and healing path are hard to talk about. Today I learned that God helps us to forgive others when we give the burden to Him.
2. Forgiveness information was very well done.
3. A lot of information in a short time.
4. Did not realize how these principles interconnect so directly – gives more clarity to approach.

5. I believe the interplay between the different theories and intervention approaches is something we can't take for granted.
6. Good bricks to build on.
7. Family systems are difficult to understand if people didn't have some background.
8. Crisis intervention steps were very helpful.
9. Crisis intervention was pretty easy to grasp and apply.

Professional Associates' Observations

Two ministry project workshop sessions were held using the ministry project materials. Two of the professional associates attended these presentations and submitted their observations and comments. The observations and comments of Dr. Orpha Galloway and Dr. Brenda Robinson follow:

OBSERVATION # ONE

On Saturday, August 13, 2016, I had the privilege of attending a workshop entitled Unbolt the Door, Child Sexual Abuse Awareness, produced and facilitated by Joyce Gackler. The sessions provided a very informative and broad analysis of the difficult situations inherent in this widespread aberrant behavior. Ms. Gackler laid out the scope of the problem, the lack of general awareness, and the devastating effects child sexual abuse causes victims, families, and ultimately society. She then suggested several strategies for addressing this abuse and provided lists of the many social agencies, which are available for consultation and actual intervention. I would highly recommend the seminar to churches, pastors, teachers and parental organizations.

Dr. Orpha Galloway,
Professor Emeritus
Cornerstone University
Grand Rapids, MI

OBSERVATION # TWO

Comments and observation of Unbolt the Door Child Sexual Abuse Awareness

workshop presentation on October 10, 2016 by doctoral candidate, Joyce Gackler:

The presentation was extremely informative. It stimulated the six seminarians to question their ability to discern child sexual abuse. They questioned how to exert their moral responsibility as ministers and pastors to get involved in helping victims and reporting offenders. The students watched the video intensely as victims shared their feelings and account of their sexual abuse. The expressions on the young men's faces were that of surprise, compassion and fear of having the responsibility of counseling victims and offenders who may become members of their church.

One student asked how prevalent child sexual abuse was in today's society. The video presented adults who shared their reaction to having to experience sexual abuse as a child and the responses they encountered from those charged to protect them. The statistics were overwhelming. Pictures of real victims in the video and manual put faces on the charts and graphs. The student pointed out that he expected to see bar graphs, which make the issue more palatable. To see real faces of victims and hearing them share their hurt and pain struck a nerve. His facial expression was one of shock.

A second student commented that is necessary for ministers to learn about safe boundaries in communication within the congregation when ministering to victims and making them aware of the realities of child sexual abuse in society. His questions included: How do you discern that children are being victimized, how do we address it, and why don't pastors address the issue?

A third student was surprised that Michigan has one of the highest child sexual abuse and sex trafficking rates in the U.S. The facilitator, Joyce Gackler, distributed information from the Kent County Human Trafficking Task Force, which details a respectable amount of information and resources concerning the crime.

Dr. Brenda Robinson, DMIN

The Hypothesis Was Supported

The hypothesis of the Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Education Project was: when leadership is presented with education and information on the facts, the steps to protect children, how to react, and the methods of pastoral care with an emphasis on the role of forgiveness, crisis intervention, and family systems education the door will be opened for healing and improved relationships within families and victims of child sexual abuse.

The results of the pre/post survey, the participants' interviews, and the professional associates' observations proved the support of the hypothesis. The pre/post survey indicated that people changed their responses following the project workshop; based on the new information they learned. The discussion and interviews with the participants showed: "They were overwhelmed with so much good information." Most participants were professionals who work with families and children. Child sexual abuse is an unpopular subject. Schools teach children sex education, but adults are not taught information about sex education, setting boundaries, monitoring Internet, pornography, and sex exploitation. Participants were amazed at the statistics and the prevalence of child sexual abuse. The statistic, one in ten children, was a shock to all of the participants. They learned they need to be aware and active in protecting all children, not just their own.

With the eight case studies in the workbook and the video, I learned many facts about the devastating effects of the trauma of sexual abuse families struggle with. I appreciated the observation comments written by two professional associates that support my hypothesis. They found the presentation to be very informative and stimulating to

them; they were amazed at the interest the participants showed, and the learning that was happening.

Conclusion

There are very few ministries focused on sexual abuse or sex education in churches or seminaries that educate students as clergy. Child sexual abuse is happening (one in ten children) regardless of economics, ethnic background, or geographic location. God has prepared me through research in the doctoral program and my personal experiences to develop a child sexual abuse awareness ministry. The generational pattern of sexual abuse behavior and attitude continues, and everyone in the family is affected. The Old Testament Book of 2 Samuel tells the problems of sexual abuse in King David's royal family. The New Testament Book of Matthew tells of God's grace in sending Jesus to bring forgiveness that opens the door to healing broken people.

Many facts and statistics about sexual abuse are not known or understood. 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser; and 90% of child who are involved in human trafficking have been sexually abused in their past. Abuse makes children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

I have been educated as an authorized facilitator to teach Stewards of Children, sponsored by Darkness to Light, a national organization. The workbooks and video containing eight survivor case studies are used to present Child Sexual Abuse Awareness including expert advice, and practical guidance for preventing child sexual abuse. The lessons include making choices, supporting each other, and simple strategies to respond to suspected sexual abuse. The Pastoral Care part of the presentation is combined

information on the role of forgiveness bringing healing, the family system theory, crisis intervention, and child abuse prevention.

The results of the pre/post surveys (true/false statements) submitted by each participant were analyzed for the summary of data. The participants shared what they learned regarding facts of child sexual abuse and pastoral care during discussion and interviews. The professional associates shared their observations and comments. The overall response was positive. Participants were amazed at the facts, statistics, and prevalence of child sexual abuse. They learned they needed to be aware and active in protecting all children, not just their own.

The eight sexual abuse case studies revealed eight personal true life experiences, how they survived, and how they were affected. One participant comment was: it takes a whole team dedicated to the prevention and healing of families who have experienced the effects of sexual trauma to loving families into healing. The hypothesis was supported and the ministry project was considered a success.

What I might do differently: Use a small toolbox. When presenting the Five Steps to Protecting Our Children, put each of the steps on index cards or some other item to represent positive ways of protection or abuse prevention and keep them in the toolbox. Carry the toolbox with you, so you can use the tools when you need them. The workbook is full of suggestions that will help to discourage and intervene instances of inappropriate sexual behavior. When more people are aware of the facts of child sexual abuse, opportunities are minimized, and the safety of children is encouraged and improved.

Suggestions for future work: 1. Create a phone app for reporting child sexual abuse: 2. Create a support group serving sexual abuse victims and/or family members:

3. Write a blog with information regarding child sexual abuse: 4. Contact seminaries, schools, or churches that would be willing to host a presentation: 5. Seek more information from Darkness to Light through their website.

Anyone can become confident and competent, knowing how to prevent sexual abuse and react skillfully when it occurs.

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